

Nature Conservation - Making People Part of the Project

People in the area are made part of the projects. Various facilities were created for visitors to allow them to experience nature in the Dümmer wetlands.



Two nature trails were created at the lake, which display the special natural features of the Dümmer lowlands to cyclists and hikers.



In the nature conservation centre Naturschutzstation Dümmer a new modern permanent exhibition was established. Through partially interactive exhibits visitors can learn about the development of the Dümmer lowlands and their significance for international nature conservation and the protection of endangered species today. In this context it is also explained how the farmers use the lowlands in a way that supports nature conservation and how the area will be further developed. A very impressive film about the

LIFE project was produced, which is shown as an integral part of the new exhibition.

The European Network "NATURA 2000"

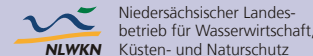
One part of these projects was a regular exchange of experiences with other national and international nature conservation organisations. This collaboration contributed to the creation of the European network Natura 2000.



Bird counts and monitoring show that after only a few years, nature conservation has achieved significant success. Species-rich wet meadows continue to develop, where many breeding bird species that had disappeared have returned to the wet grasslands. The populations of meadow birds are increasing and some species have very high fledging success, something that has become rare in many European areas.



Projectmanagement



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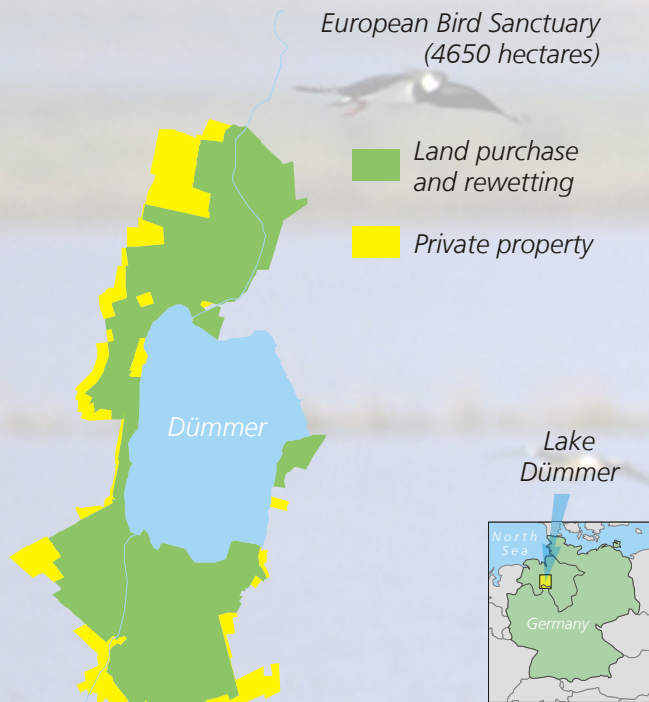
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LIFE Nature Projects for the Rewetting of Lake Dümmer Lowlands

The LIFE Nature Projects

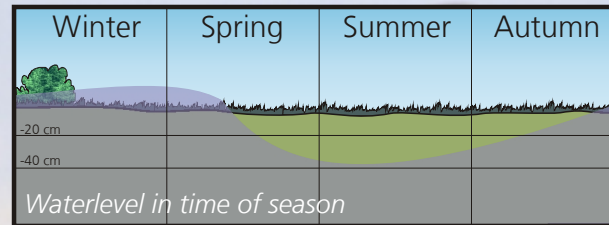
Within the framework of two LIFE Nature projects, controllable rewetting of the meadows in the Lake Dümmer lowlands was achieved. In the Ochsenmoor Fen an area of about 1,000 hectares was rewet between 1998 and 2000. Another area of 1,300 hectares was rewet in the western Lake Dümmer fen area between 2002 and 2007. Approximately 4 million EUR were invested in the purchase of land and in measures for nature protection. This meant that a total area of 2,500 ha was successfully consolidated in the European bird sanctuary of Lake Dümmer.



These measures aim to develop a large area of wet grasslands as a suitable habitat for meadow birds. Another goal of the development plan is that local farmers work the meadows in a sustainable fashion that is compliant with the goals of nature conservation.

The Rewetting

Controllable weirs were built into the drainage ditches. Water levels can now be adjusted and set to levels that were typical for the area before dikes were built on the river Hunte and Lake Dümmer.



Flooding in winter and slow step-by-step drainage during early and late spring recreate suitable habitats for numerous species of meadow birds, which were threatened with extinction.



At the same time the meadows can be used by the local farmers during the summer and in this way the formerly intensively farmed land can continue to be used for grazing.

Nature Conservation and Farming in accordance

The conservation areas are leased out to over 100 local farmers. The area is managed by the local nature conservation centre Naturschutzstation Dümmer. The staff ensure that the conservation goals of the EU bird habitat are achieved and that at the same time the farmers remain part of the project through their usage and maintenance of the meadows in a manner consistent with nature conservation.



To ensure a sustainable usage of the grasslands in a fashion that supports nature conservation, special maintenance equipment was sourced.



150 km of new fences were built in the grassland areas. This helps to ensure that areas which cannot be used profitably by the farmers continue to be used for grazing and are kept in good condition.