

Company: Lafarge
Location: Rahmstorf, Germany

Objective To preserve the nesting habitat of the sand martin (also known as the bank swallow), a rare species of swallow that comes to nest in the quarry every year.

Context This quarry has been supplying sand to the Rahmstorf concrete roof tile plant since 1962, and is due to remain active until 2033. Sand martins use the soft walls of the quarry as a nesting habitat every year, from April through July.

Solution The first males return from tropical Africa in late April to early May and begin to dig their cavities. The walls occupied by the birds are left intact until the birds leave in late July. Mining operations are not suspended, but carried out in other parts of the quarry, taking care to avoid disturbing the birds. In addition, the rehabilitation program is coordinated with quarrying activities. Initially focused on reforestation, the project is now geared to the natural development of native plants that have been deliberately reintroduced into the site since 1990.

Result Since 1985, sand martins have spontaneously chosen this site as their nesting habitat. As many as 250 pairs have been counted in a single season. The quarry offers a natural setting with alternating wetland and wooded areas.

