

**Company:** CEMEX

**Location:** Lüttow-Valluhn, Germany

**Objective** The aim of the project was to offer the most favourable habitats to the bank swallow, which is on the Red List of endangered animal species throughout Europe.

**Context** Gravel and sand has been mined since 1992. A 100 hectare lake with sandy embankments developed as a result of the mining. This combination of large water areas and undisturbed sandy embankments are essential to the bank swallow. It is the smallest European swallow species and is the most endangered. It seeks cold rock faces as breeding points, into which it buries 50 to 70 cm long tubes. Its breeding tubes are preferably installed in light and medium soil, where sand forms a mixture with clay, mud or humus. Since they never use the tubes a second time, the swallows always need new breeding areas. Natural, constantly renewing rock faces - such as undercut and undeveloped banks of rivers and streams - rarely exist in today's natural countryside. The streams, meanwhile, have been controlled and course changes that could result in the development of new rock faces are no longer possible. 80% of the bank swallow population in the inland area therefore use the mining areas in gravel sand strip mines as a replacement biotope.

**Solution** In order to offer the most favorable habitats to the bank swallow, CEMEX Deutschland continuously restores the breeding and resting areas in Lüttow-Valluhn. With great care and under the observation of expert nature preservation requirements, the employees manually and mechanically work the steep embankments.

**Result** The bank swallow has been at home in Lüttow-Valluhn for many years with the annual population including 200 to 250 breeding couples. 1,000 to 1,200 breeding couples have been counted overall in the raw material locations of Mecklenburg. "Father of the swallows", Gert Förster of the NABU group bank swallow protection has cared for the colonies for more than ten years. He examines the mining locations each spring and points out areas that are suitable for breeding. In addition to numerous migrating birds, for which the lake area of the excavation is an important resting and sleeping area, additional rare bird species such as little ringed plovers and avocets can be observed. In order to also establish such protected species long-term, the gravel pit employees are preparing raw gravel grounds as nesting places. Within the scope of the restoration prize of 2004, the Minister of Commerce and Industry of the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern honored the gravel pit for its activities.

**Partners** NABU group bank swallow

