

The CEMEX UK Twite Conservation Project

Dove Holes, Derbyshire

CEMEX UK & The RSPB

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

At Dove Holes quarry CEMEX have been working with the RSPB for 2 years, helping to save the Twite, by creating a 5 hectare flower-rich meadow, through supplementary feeding and sensitively managing operational areas of the site.

For the project we brought together the best stakeholders to help ensure its success. 5 people were involved – 2 CEMEX, 2 RSPB and 1 local neighbour.

Rural setting. This is the first project of its kind focused on providing high quality foraging habitats for twite on a quarry, including creating a targeted 5ha hay meadow.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

The field was a poor grassland habitat before the enhancement work.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

This project was part mitigation but mainly a enhancement conservation opportunity.



Photo: Dove Holes Twite. Credit - Tim Melling

CEMEX strive to be the best for our communities, and we believe helping to save this critically threatened bird is important.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

At Dove Holes quarry CEMEX have been working with the RSPB for 2 years, helping to save the Twite, by creating a 5 hectare flower-rich meadow, through supplementary feeding and sensitively managing operational areas of the site.

The twite is native to Britain and is included on the red list of birds of conservation concern. The English population is now largely

confined to the south Pennines, where the breeding population has declined by over 90% over the last 20 years.

With 20% of the UK population the size of the twite breeding population at Dove Hole quarry is significant. This is the first project of its kind focused on providing high quality foraging habitats for twite on a quarry, including creating a targeted 5ha hay meadow.

It is envisaged that we will maintain this project for the life of the quarry – 50+ years.

Breeding birds in Dove Holes make use of the numerous fissures and holes within the extensive bare cliff faces. Twite feed almost exclusively on seeds. This means a constant supply is required throughout the breeding period.

This is an innovative project as:

- We have undertaken supplementary feeding to help the twite in their critical nesting period.
- We monitor the whole site to ensure we have enough disturbed ground which produces a crop of annuals, which produce copious seeds.
- We have undertaken extensive monitoring of the birds through George Hudson a local bird watcher.
- We continually monitor the conservation plans effectiveness and consequently modified the plan as it has developed.
- We have seen low numbers now increased to flocks of over 40 birds.
- We are also working with Nature After Minerals to encourage neighbouring operators to take up this conservation scheme.

CEMEX UK have worked extensively with the RSPB and local bird surveyors on this project.

Working with local people who have the expertise and are enthusiastic is key to ensuring success. Look to get other neighbouring operators involved to help scale it up, the challenge of saving nature is too big for any one company.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

The enhancement was through best practice meadow restoration.

There has been a significant increase in twite onsite with a flock of 50 reported this year.

Working with invested stakeholders has been the key to the success of the project.

Using the knowledge of the RSPB and the enthusiasm of the local neighbour monitoring the birds onsite.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Twite are critically endangered in England and this project could help save them.