

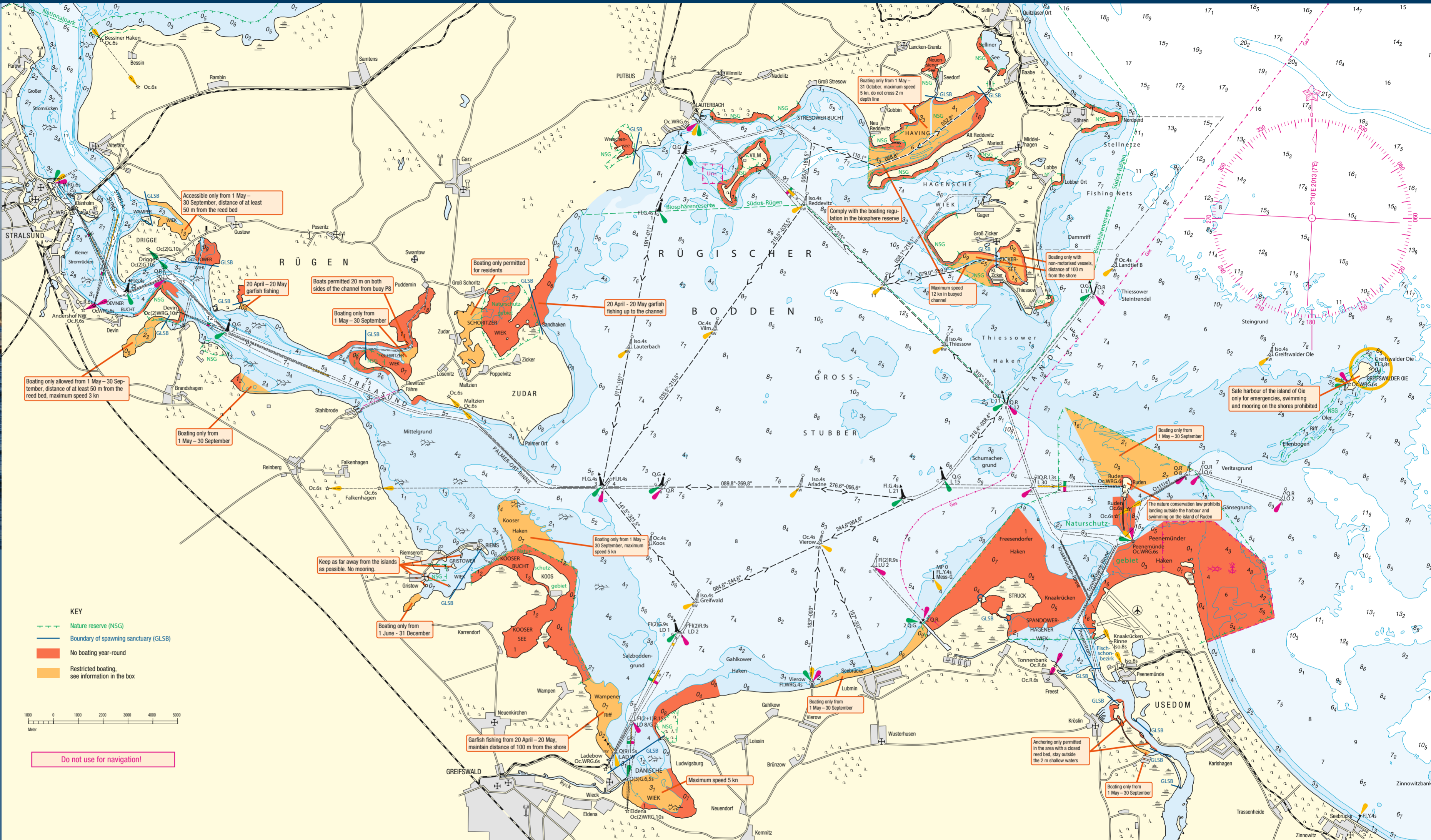
The Bay of Greifswald is in your hands

Voluntary agreement for nature conservation, recreational use and fishing in the Bay of Greifswald and Strelasund



Welcome to this unique habitat for flora and fauna and a paradise for water sports enthusiasts and fishing fans. The Bay of Greifswald (Greifswalder Bodden) and Strelasund feature an unrivalled natural environment and a magnificent water landscape for lots of fun water sports. We want you to enjoy your stay as much as the birds that visit the Bay of Greifswald and Strelasund every year in their tens of thousands to breed, rest or spend the winter. Nature is what makes these waters so unique. We want it to stay that way. Please join us in our efforts.

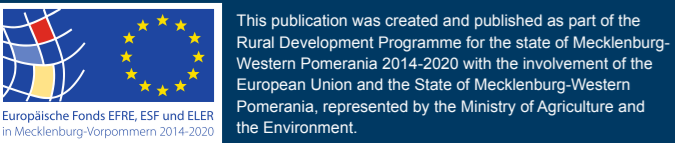
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Landesruderverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
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The project
Together with the Strelasund, the Bay of Greifswald is part of "Natura 2000", the European network of protected areas. The area has protected area status under the EU Habitats Directive and is also a European bird sanctuary. But recreational uses are also permitted which require respect for the natural surroundings and good practices.

Intensive discussions between water sports and fishing clubs in the region, WWF and the competent authorities have given rise to voluntary agreements regulating the use of the area from which all parties benefit. The consensus reached between the parties involved reflects nature conservation requirements as well as special recreational uses in equal measure. All stakeholders involved in the discussions had to demonstrate their willingness to compromise.

However, an agreement of this kind can only be effective if all parties comply with it. A single boater is enough to drive flocks of birds out of important feeding grounds permanently. Through your actions, you can show that voluntary agreements and awareness can be a successful approach and that laws and regulations are not necessary.

The Federal Republic of Germany is bound by the European Union to preserve the value of the Bay of Greifswald and Strelasund as a European natural heritage site. Help make these efforts successful.

Natura 2000
The Bay of Greifswald and Strelasund are home to a diverse range of plant and animal species. The coastline with its many bays, different water depths and salt contents offer a wide variety of habitats. Due to their special role in nature conservation, international and national protected areas have been designated here. The entire region is an important component of Natura 2000, a network of protected areas comprising all countries of the European Union. It is made up of two components: Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

SPAs for birds protect areas with unique bird species. The case of migratory birds is evidence that successful bird protection is only possible with international cooperation.

SACs protect threatened habitats and particularly endangered animal and plant species throughout Europe.

In December 2011, the management plan for the SAC "Bay of Greifswald, parts of the Strelasund and northern tip of Usedom" was adopted. This plan explicitly states that the use of the Bay as an attractive recreational area is considered acceptable if the voluntary agreement continues to be rigorously upheld.

Nature reserves
Various areas of the Bay of Greifswald and the surrounding areas have long been protected as nature reserves. Independently of the voluntary agreement, the respective ordinances and management guidelines apply in the nature reserves which are available in German on the lung.mv-regierung.de website. Many nature reserves are also part of the Natura 2000 network and thus benefit from dual protection.

Further information
You can download all of the information about Natura 2000 and the management plan for the SAC "Bay of Greifswald, parts of the Strelasund and the northern tip of Usedom" in German from the website of the Staatliches Amt für Landwirtschaft und Umwelt Vorpommern at stalu-mv.de

wwf.de/greifswalder-bodden provides information in German on the details of the voluntary agreements for boating and fishing in the Bay of Greifswald and the Strelasund as well as interesting information about the Bay and many downloads.

There is also public information available at the harbours and marinas.

If you have questions or suggestions, please contact:

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Characteristic species in the region



White-tailed eagle
Straight, broad wings with an impressive wingspan of 240 cm are the hallmark of our largest domestic bird of prey, which is by no means rare on the Baltic coast of Western Pomerania. Several breeding pairs nest in old trees near the Bay of Greifswald and can be seen flying overhead as they hunt. Carrion is one primary food source, but they also like to prey on live ducks, coots and larger fish.



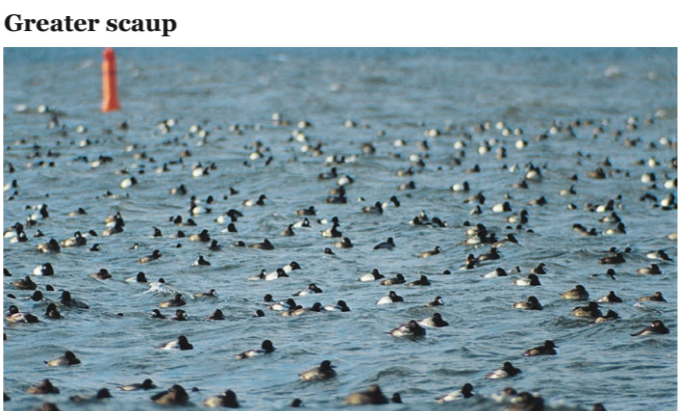
Common merganser
With their serrated bills, these elegant diving birds maintain a firm hold on their slippery prey. The mergansers find ideal liv-

ing conditions in the Bay with its abundance of fish. But they need clear water because they hunt by sight. Sometimes whole groups come together to drive schools of fish into a tight space. Mergansers feed almost exclusively on small fish that are of little interest for commercial fishing. Today, the colourful and magnificent ducks have become rare – also due to the absence of suitable breeding sites. They nest in hollow trees close to the shore. The region is one of the most important wintering areas for this species. With a bit of luck, you can see whole families swimming with their offspring in the sheltered areas close to the banks of the Bay.



Grey seal
Intensive hunting and environmental toxins have almost led to the complete disappearance of the grey seals in the Baltic Sea. Since 2004, however, more and more grey seals have returned to the Bay of Greifswald. International protection and less pollution in the Baltic Sea have helped populations recover in recent years. If you come into contact with grey seals, please follow these rules:

- never block their escape route to the water
- maintain a distance of at least 100 m; if the animals are nervous, increase the distance
- don't touch or feed the grey seals
- avoid loud noises and sudden movements
- keep dogs on a leash
- if necessary, make others aware of these rules
- please inform the German Oceanographic Museum Stralsund at **+49 3831 2650 3333** if you see injured or dead grey seal



Greater scaup
These tundra breeders spend almost nine months of each year in the Bay of Greifswald, which is the perfect place for wintering and mating. On Kooser See alone, there are often well over 10,000 greater scaups in spring. There are about 40,000 birds in the entire Bay of Greifswald. They prefer the quiet side bays and shallow waters near the shore. Undisturbed places to sleep during the day are important for them.



Common tern
Common terns are perfect fish hunters. From high above, they skillfully dive straight into the water and hunt even nimble small fish. Worms and molluscs are not spurned either. Common terns breed in densely packed colonies, often together with black-headed gulls. Gustow and Gristower Wiek are the most important breeding grounds in the area. Common terns are very sensitive to disturbances. Even small disturbances can drive a colony away forever. They only return to Europe from their Af-

rican wintering areas at the end of April and leave again for the south as early as August.



Black-headed gull
The black-headed gull is the smallest gull species in the Pomeranian Bay. During the breeding season, black-headed gulls have a typical dark-brown head that progressively, however, turns into spots over the course of the year. Black-headed gulls breed in colonies, preferably on the islands.



Pike
Pike is a predatory, freshwater fish that also thrives in brackish water. The dorsal and anal fins are placed far back on its body, allowing for instantaneous acceleration. It usually has a dark green back and white belly so the fish are well camouflaged – depending on which angle they are seen from. The reeded areas and seagrass beds of the Bay provide cover. Pikes eat all kinds of fish, even their own. They also prey on frogs, birds and small mammals.

Habitats

In vast areas of the Bay of Greifswald, the water is barely more than 2 metres deep. These shallow water zones permeated with light are the secret to the vibrancy and diversity of the Bay. Underwater growth comprised of seaweed, pondweed, stoneworts and many other plants creates a very unique habitat. Snails, mussels, bristle worms, crustaceans exist in huge quantities and serve as food for larger animals. This is why expansive spawning grounds for fish like the Baltic herring and garfish can be found in the shallow waters.

Important: Please do not operate boats in shallow waters where you will see large gatherings of birds. It is particularly in these areas that plentiful feeding grounds can often be found. Please also keep in mind that boating is restricted in many shallow water areas. Details can be found on the map overleaf or in the agreements for the different areas.



The Bay of Greifswald owes its special importance for birds and its large populations of diverse species of small animals to its many mudflats. Since the Bay does not have a tidal range, the mudflats dry out depending on the prevailing winds. Some stay dry for days and are an extreme and rare habitat with international significance. Especially important for birds are the areas on both sides of the water's edge – the areas that have just dried out and the areas that have been washed over. These areas are always in a different location depending on the water level, but

since the Bay has mudflats of varying heights, the birds always find something to eat somewhere. However, the currently usable mudflats are usually very small.

It is therefore extremely important that these rare habitats remain undisturbed. **Consequently: Please do not enter the mudflats from either the water or the land.** Groups of birds that suddenly take to the air are often a signal for other flocks in the surroundings to take flight. A single disturbance can “clear out” several hectares of wind mudflats. During the breeding season and migration, the food situation of the birds is particularly critical. Recurring disturbances can have life-threatening consequences for the birds.



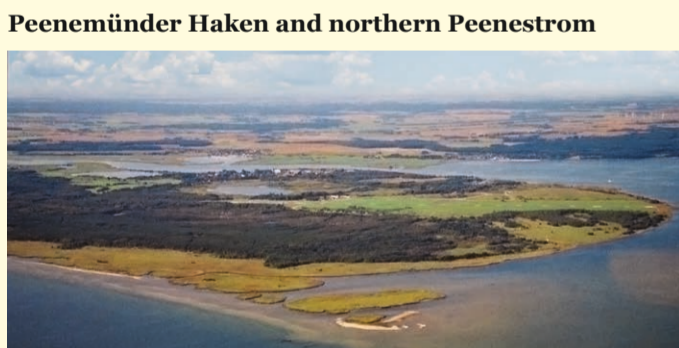
The vitality of the reed biotope is difficult to see with the naked eye. The many breeding birds, including reed warblers, common reed buntings and bearded reedlings, are hidden deep in the stalks of the reeds. Some species of duck and the Western marsh harrier breed in the reeds and many insect species also live hidden inside the reed stalks.

The reeds around the Bay of Greifswald are brackish water reeds. They differ considerably from freshwater reeds and are a habitat for special plant species – despite their very similar appearance. Reeds are protected biotopes under state law.

Please keep your distance from the edges of the reed beds and reduce your speed near the reed bed to under 5 kn to minimise the wave impact and ensure that the reed inhabitants are not disturbed.

Some areas

... and what you can do to protect them.



Peenemünder Haken and northern Peenestrom
Around the northwest tip of the island of Usedom, the Peenemünder Haken, there are extensive wind mudflats and areas of shallow waters. They are one of the most important migratory stopover sites in the southern Baltic Sea. Among other things, the mudflats and shallow waters are an important feeding, resting and sleeping area for water birds and waders along their migratory route. It is not unusual to see well over 10,000 ducks here.

Boating and fishing are not permitted year-round in the shallow waters around the Peenemünder Haken and the island of Struck. Please do not walk on the wind mudflats – not even from the beach of the Peenemünde Haken. The dried-out mudflats and sandbanks, which are usually small in size, are extremely important resting and feeding grounds for birds. When operating a boat through the Peenestrom, please keep your distance from the bird island of Großer Wotig and do not cross the 2 m depth line. Anchor only where there is complete cover to the island by reed beds.



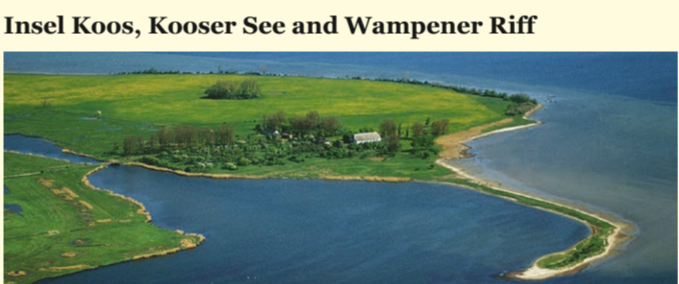
Having Bay
Having Bay plays a special role for birds as a migratory stopover site and source of food. The rich underwater vegetation is home to the diverse invertebrate fauna of the Bay and is an excellent habitat for fish. Waterbirds, seagulls and terns find sumptuous delicacies here all year round. The expansive reed zones are important breeding grounds for ducks and songbirds that live in the reed beds.

The agreement stipulates that no boating or fishing is permitted in Having Bay's shallow waters from the shore to the 2 m depth line. The speed limit is 5 kn outside the buoyed channel; in addition, motorised boats may only be operated in these water areas from 1 May to 31 October.



Schoritzer Wiek
This shallow bay in the west of the Bay of Greifswald is populated all year round, particularly by swimming birds. However, waders and terns are also common in large numbers. The Eurasian teal, garganey, Eurasian wigeon, tufted duck and many other species of duck stop over to rest in the bay during migration. Starting in early summer, it is a protected moulting area for dabbling ducks and greylag geese. From July to October, Schoritzer Wiek is a resting and sleeping spot for several thousand mute swans. The yellow-billed whooper swans join them in winter.

According to the management guideline for the nature reserve, boating is not permitted in Schoritzer Wiek year round. The area is a spawning sanctuary. Exceptions apply only to residents in the Maltziener Wiek.



Insel Koos, Kooser See and Wampener Riff
In the area around the island of Koos, the boundaries between water and land are blurred. Bays divide the winding shoreline. Ponds and streams cover the many small islands. When the water is low, stones and sandbanks emerge from the sea. The multifaceted landscape is a paradise for birds. Breeding, raising, foraging, moulting or migratory stopovers – it's busy all year. There are often several thousand birds in the area at the same time, mainly ducks and geese. Many species of wading birds breed on the salt marshes. The last breeding sites of the ringed plover and oystercatcher in the Bay of Greifswald, can be found on the sandy and pebble beaches, which have little vegetation.

No boating or fishing is allowed in the shallow waters around the island of Koos, Kooser See and the shallow waters to the south-east including the Wampener Riff (exception: garfish fishing on the Wampener Riff in May). From October to April, boating is also not permitted in the shallow waters around the Kooser Haken because it is an important winter resting spot for water birds. The area may not be entered because birds can only breed and rest if they are undisturbed.

Swimming is permitted at the Wampen dredging site within the designated areas. From here you have an excellent view of the bird life in the area.

Boating regulation in the biosphere reserve
A boating regulation has been in force in the Southeast Rügen Biosphere Reserve since 1997. It was adopted by the Federal Ministry of Transport to keep the most important water areas in the biosphere reserve free of disturbances.

The regulation stipulates that boats are not permitted in some sections of water near the shore, usually 100 m long strips. This mainly involves sections around the island of Vilm and the bays of Mönchgut, as well as some other smaller areas. In Having Bay, Kaming and Zickersee, boating is also limited to non-motorised vessels (except for the navigation channels).

The provisions of the boating regulation are shown in the official nautical charts.

Under the scope of the joint project of the water sports, fishing and nature conservation associations, different provisions were agreed for Having Bay which allow boating in extensive areas of the water for half the year in summer. The competent authority has granted a temporary exemption which will only be extended if the agreement is complied with.



November – February
Migration comes to an end with the first frost, but the Bay is certainly not empty of birds. For many species of ducks and Arctic swans, the Bay already is “the south”. They stay in Bay of Greifswald and Strelasund over the winter. Sea ducks – like the long-tailed duck, which has its most important European wintering area here in the coastal waters of Western Pomerania – are a unique feature.

Birds in the Bay throughout the year

April – June
The rare waders breed on the islands and in the salt marshes. After their young have hatched, they continuously forage for food. The terns and gulls that breed in colonies also prefer the islands as breeding grounds. Most ducks, on the other hand, nest in reed beds. They can only be seen again after their young have hatched when the flock of offspring has its first life experiences on the open water in the presence of their parents. The little ducks can't fly yet so the families only feel safe in undisturbed waters. The older birds of many species can also only fly with difficulty or not at all from early summer onwards. They are in what is known as the “moulting phase” when they change their feathers.

July – August
Bird migration gets under way as early as July. Non-breeders or bird pairs with lost offspring arrive at the Pomeranian Bay with its abundant sources of food from their Nordic breeding areas. More arrive every week. The first young birds arrive from Siberia starting in August. They have often never had contact with humans and therefore have short flight distances. Some species have their moulting period during these months and cannot fly because they are losing their feathers. They prefer to stay in undisturbed bays.

September – October
Ducks, geese, cranes, but also waders and songbirds – all the big names are headed south. For most of these species, the waters of the Pomeranian Bay are an essential stopover because the birds need rest and nourishment along the long migratory routes. Many tens of thousands of birds use the Bay of Greifswalder and Strelasund as a stopover and often stay for several weeks.

March
In spring, birds are in a hurry to reach their breeding grounds. They don't stay anywhere for long. As a stepping stone, the Bay of Greifswald and Strelasund offer a much-needed quick snack along the strenuous migratory route.