Two projects and key partnerships already underway!

Capacity Building – Several national capacity building courses and a regional flyway workshop will be organized in close connection to the development of a capacity building concept for the East Atlantic Flyway. There will also be awareness activities and small-scale flyway management initiatives. A framework for future cooperation with partners along the flyway will allow further activities after the project's end in early 2014.

Monitoring – Within a framework for integrated flyway monitoring along the East Atlantic Flyway, a regional monitoring strategy for Western Africa will be developed. Practical pilot activities with bird counts and training in monitoring will give input for the development of a strategy to gain a sustainable and cost-effective monitoring system along the flyway in future. A simultaneous total count of all key sites organized by the local partners in West Africa will be carried out in January 2013.

The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative has already met with national and regional agencies in West Africa in order to develop strong partnerships, including partners engaged in the *Conservation of Migratory Birds* (CMB) project of *BirdLife International* and *Wetlands International*. The close collaboration with the CMB project and other important partners will improve future cooperation and the vision of a joint management of the East Atlantic Flyway.

▼ Bar-tailed Godwit in the Banc d'Arguin National Park

THE WADDEN SEA FLYWAY INITIATIVE

Linking the Wadden Sea with critical sites along the East Atlantic Flyway in Africa

The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

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Photos: Barend van Gemerden, Nicolas van Ingen (title)
Printed on 100% recycling paper

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

PROGRAMMA NAAR EEN RIJKE WADDENZEE

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site since 2009

WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE

The Wadden Sea

The Wadden Sea is a vast coastal wetland comprising tidal flats, islands, salt marshes and other habitats, stretching over 450 km along the North Sea coast of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. At almost 10,000 square kilometres in extent, it is one of the largest wetlands in the world. It has enjoyed a protected status for more than 20 years and is jointly managed by the *Trilateral Cooperation for the Protection of the Wadden Sea.*

The Coast of West Africa

The coastal zone of West Africa supports some of the highest concentrations of migratory birds in the world, and is therefore a priority zone for the conservation of migratory birds. A large proportion of these birds depend on a network of critical sites along the flyway to enable them to complete their migrations successfully. Some of the most important sites for migrants are found in West Africa between Mauritania and Sierra Leone, where there is a high level of marine productivity. Many migratory bird species are sharply declining and becoming increasingly threatened with extinction. Currently 12% of all migratory bird species are considered globally threatened or near-threatened.

◀ Spoonbills in the Banc d'Arguin National Park

Birds in the Wadden Sea

The Wadden Sea is of outstanding international importance for birds as a staging, moulting and wintering area, especially for migratory waders. According to the Ramsar Convention the Wadden Sea is essential for the existence of at least 52 populations of 41 migratory waterbird species that use the East Atlantic flyway and which originate from breeding populations as far away as northern Siberia and Northeast Canada. Only in the Wadden Sea they will find enough food to complete their journeys of thousands of kilometres.

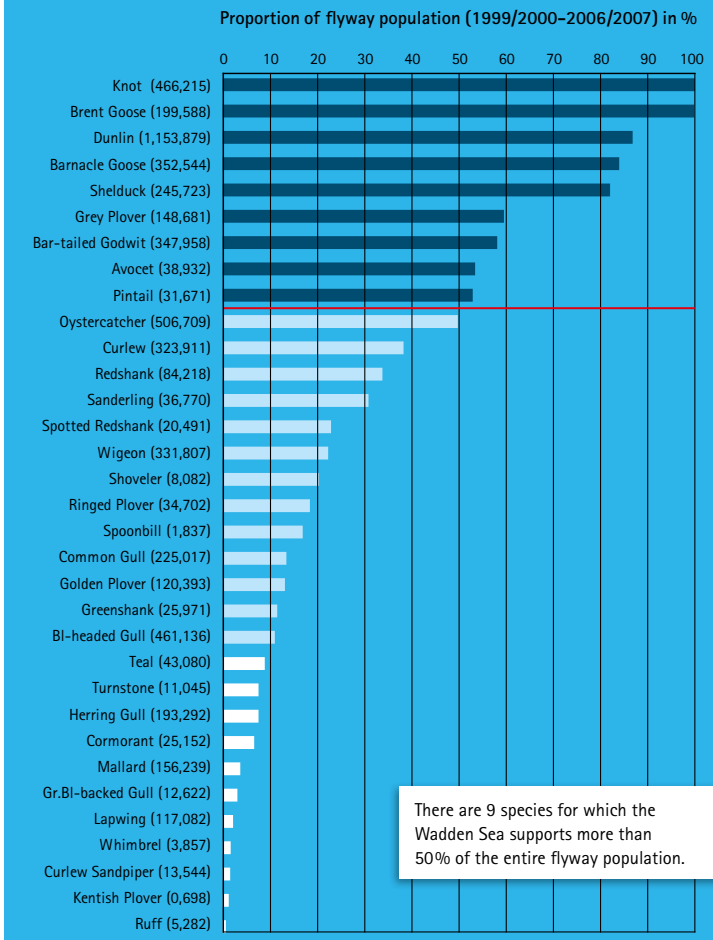
Every year more than 6.1 million birds may be present in the Wadden Sea at the same time, whilst on average 10 to 12 million birds use the Wadden Sea each year on migration between their northern breeding grounds and their wintering areas in Europe, Africa and even further afield.

Global responsibility

In 2009 UNESCO placed the Dutch-German Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List recognizing the crucial importance of the site for the survival of migratory birds on a global scale. Both countries have now an enhanced responsibility to strengthen cooperation with other countries for the conservation of migratory birds, especially along the East Atlantic Flyway.

Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

The *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative* has thus been launched to put this into action. In the first instance, two projects have been developed under the initiative that together aim to increase capacity for migratory bird conservation and monitoring along the western seaboard of Africa. The projects, which run from 2012-2014, are funded by the *German Federal Ministry for the Environment* and the *Dutch Ministry of Economic affairs, Agriculture and Innovation.* The aims of the *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative* are to support the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the region, to obtain more detailed monitoring data and to develop a long-term perspective for the cooperation of the Wadden Sea with countries along the whole flyway.



Collaboration with BirdLife and AEWA

The *Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative* is working in close collaboration with other migratory bird conservation projects and initiatives in West Africa, notably the *BirdLife Conservation of Migratory Birds* (CMB) project funded by MAVA Foundation, implemented in collaboration with *Wetlands International* and other partners and *The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds* (AEWA). For the future the Initiative aims for sustainable cooperation with partners and international projects along the whole East Atlantic Flyway by further enhancing and integrating the flyway perspective into the work plan of the *Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation.*