



WWF

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on behalf
of WWF
Germany

TRAVEL AND PROTECT:

Contributing to Nature Conservation through Tourism in the Wadden Sea

Good practice and recommendations
as a basis for further discussions on
sustainable financing mechanisms
through tourism in the Wadden Sea
World Heritage Destination

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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PREFACE

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■ The Wadden Sea along the Danish, German and Dutch North Sea coast is a globally unique ecosystem and one of the last "wild" nature areas in Western Europe. Largely protected as national parks or with other protection schemes and acknowledged as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2009, the entire area is subject to high conservation status aiming for undisturbed natural development and dynamics.

At the same time, the Wadden Sea coast and islands with their recreational values and unique opportunities for nature experience are among the most popular destinations for coastal tourism. About 30–40 million day trippers and 10 million overnight guests visit the Wadden Sea region each year. Surveys reveal that for many guests the beauty of nature and the existence

of the Wadden Sea National Parks or other protected areas are among the main reasons for their visit – for many of them it is even the main reason.

The unique nature and landscape of the Wadden Sea have undoubtedly become an important basis for tourism businesses over recent decades and contribute to employment and income in the region. The status as World Heritage Site promises additional incentives for national and international guests to spend their holidays along the coast or on the islands. The tourism sector – among them thousands of small and local businesses – thus profits considerably from well-protected nature.

In many parts of the world it is common practice for the tourism sector to contribute to nature conservation. Entrance fees to protected areas, user fees and concessions for the economic "use" of nature or tourism-related

taxes help to finance the protection and management of the vulnerable tourist resource. For the Wadden Sea, however, such effective win-win situations can only be found in a few places at the moment.

As a non-governmental nature conservation representative and project partner of the EU funded Interreg IVB-project *PROWAD Protect & Prosper – Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea*, WWF Germany has been involved in the recent development of the strategy *Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination* and the implementation of concrete measures and activities.

With this compilation of successful mechanisms of tourism-related financial contributions to protected areas, WWF wants to present examples which may also help to ensure continuous nature conservation activities and visitor management in the Wadden Sea. In view of the serious underfunding of necessary conservation activities – e.g. for climate adaptation, habitat restoration, wardening and public information – we consider it appropriate that those who use and benefit from nature also contribute to its protection and thus understand that raising funds is a joint responsibility of nature conservation and the tourism sector.

The proposed recommendations shall contribute to the further development of sustainable tourism as intended in an action plan that has been set up alongside the tourism strategy. Yet the compilation cannot be a blueprint or a concrete plan for this. Rather, it intends to initiate discussions from the local to the trilateral level and to support the creation of ideas, initiatives and actions at all those levels to achieve further win-win-situations between tourism and nature protection.



Anja Szczesinski
WWF Wadden Sea Office

INTRODUCTION

The linkage between tourism and nature conservation in the Wadden Sea

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■ With the recognition of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) from 2009 to 2014¹, the long-term cooperation in cross-border nature conservation between Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands was awarded and widely recognised. Thereby, the common efforts, discussions and strategies to protect the Wadden Sea ecosystem as a place of “*outstanding universal value*” became visible and have more than paid off (UNESCO 2013). Coastal zones and islands, tidal

flats, sandbanks, dunes and salt marshes form highly valuable habitats for animals and plants. At the same time the Wadden Sea region is an important place for people to live, work and recreate.

However, the protection of the Wadden Sea has not been an easy task and for a number of decades problems have had to be discussed and struggled with, for example related to industrial installations, pollution, shipping, fisheries, coastal defence or tourism. Solutions have been found for some of the environmental challenges. Other problems, such as important issues related to oil drilling, shipping and fisheries, remain largely unsolved so far. And some threats, above all the increase in sea level rise, have unfortunately even increased in importance and constitute serious challenges for the future protection of the Wadden Sea.²

For the majority of tourism-related impacts, solutions or at least acceptable compromises have been found which ensure sufficient nature protection while tourists enjoy and explore the landscape. Visitor centres and signposts have been installed in many places along the coast and on the islands to inform about the

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- 1 In a first step it was only the Dutch and the German Wadden Sea which was nominated and, in 2009, listed in the World Heritage list. In 2014, the Danish Wadden Sea was included.
- 2 See “Climate Goal 2030” for the Wadden Sea Region decided upon with the Sylt Declaration 2010 (cwss 2010) and the “Climate Change Adaptation Strategy” of the Tønder Declaration 2014 (cwss 2014B).

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site

 World Heritage Area



As a touristic destination, the Wadden Sea Region includes the national parks and other conservation areas that have been designated as World Heritage Site as well as the entire islands, local communities and districts at the bordering mainland.

Wadden Sea, illustrate sensitive zones such as breeding areas and to show appropriate ways to experience nature. Facilities such as nature trails, parking areas and recreation zones have been built to facilitate easier access to the landscape and biodiversity of the Wadden Sea. This tourism related infrastructure also supports conservation by bringing visitors into contact with nature, thus raising awareness of nature and the environment. And at the same time the infrastructure helps to mitigate the impact of tourism, which remains a factor due to the high numbers of visitors.

Nowadays, more than 10 million holiday makers arrive annually to enjoy the coasts and beaches of the Wadden Sea region; for 2007 there is an estimate of about 49.2 million overnight stays (CWSS 2009). Another 30–40 million daily visitors contribute to the enormous importance the tourism sector has achieved as a main economic factor in a generally structurally weak region that directly benefits from intact nature (CWSS 2014 A).³ In the German Wadden Sea region, national park related tourism already accounts for an annual income in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea region of about € 90 million and about € 60 million in the Wadden Sea region of Lower Saxony (JOB 2013). Moreover, several surveys show that World Heritage Sites might become even more attractive travel destinations after their listing, if properly managed and communicated.⁴ To keep the balance between nature conservation and environmentally friendly tourism activities

3 The contribution to the region's social income from tourism e.g. in the travel destination "Nordsee Schleswig-Holstein" is 41 % (NORDSEE-TOURISMUS-SERVICE 2014).

4 See selected reports and case studies presented in REBANKS CONSULTING 2009.

in these destinations, a common strategy and effective mechanisms for sustainable development are needed.

As a follow-up to a request by UNESCO when listing the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands tasked a trilateral working group to develop a strategy for *Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination* (see CWSS 2014 A). The group representing the tourism sector, nature conservation organisations and governments jointly agreed on their *"responsibility*

for and [to] contribute to the protection of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' through involvement in tourism management and product development" as strategic objectives. Moreover, it is stated that all stakeholders are committed *"to ensure nature conservation, tourism and local communities benefit from the World Heritage Status"* (CWSS 2014 A). These statements clearly reflect the three-dimension approach of sustainable development with respect to ecological, economic and social benefits and outline the importance to not only focus on one component of benefits.

2.1 CONSERVATION REQUIRES SUPPORT

■ When it comes to the financial and institutional support of nature conservation and its link to tourism in the Wadden Sea, public and private sector contributions differ. The typical visitor infrastructure of information centres, signposts, marking of sensitive areas as well as provision and maintenance of paths, boardwalks, etc. is mainly financed through public sector budgets of the individual countries, and to some extent also by environmental NGOs. The individual tourist is usually not charged for accessing the Wadden Sea and using the provided infrastructure. Only at a very few places are fees charged for certain uses (e.g. access to the beach by car) which are subsequently used for cost covering of the provided infrastructure and to a minor extent also for nature conservation.

The so called "soft infrastructure" such as nature interpretation and guided tours is mainly provided by non-governmental and private actors, and also by state-funded national park wardens (see NATIONALPARK SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEINISCHES WATTENMEER 2013). At some places public funds also contribute to the logistics necessary to keep these activities at an appropriate level. All these offers contribute to the visitors' nature experience possibilities and choice of leisure time offers, thus providing a considerable benefit for the tourist experience.

The practical "ranger" tasks of ensuring compliance with existing rules and at the same time providing information and opportunities for nature experiences for tourists are partly carried out by state-financed wardens and, in many places (though a bit different among the three countries), assisted or completely covered by environmental NGOs and volunteers, often supported in this work by governmental funding.

Despite tourism and nature conservation mostly working well "hand in hand", the protection of the Wadden Sea is in many cases underfunded – also with respect to minimizing the impact of tourism related activities. In particular, the "ranger" tasks of ensuring compliance with existing rules cannot be provided to the necessary extent in large parts of the area. But habitat restoration and the challenges to ensure the preservation of the Wadden Sea's natural beauty and richness against the background of a changing climate and rising sea level also face a lack of financing (see WWF GERMANY 2013A).

In relation to the ongoing pressure, the protection of the Wadden Sea is seriously underfunded – as in most other places in the world. While the conventional sources of conservation funding, such as by governments and by the work of nature NGOs, are extremely important and certainly have to remain so, this is not

enough today and might be even less sufficient in the future. Challenges and threats such as climate change and biodiversity loss demand action by all parties involved – in particular also by those stakeholder groups whose income is based on intact nature and successful conservation, such as the tourism sector.¹⁵ Therefore, it seems to be appropriate to consider a systematic approach to how tourism can take care of and protect the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

2.2 TOURISM CAN HELP SUPPORT CONSERVATION

■ In order to implement the strategy for *Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination* (CWSS 2014A), an Action Plan has been set up that, among others, comprises the provision of financial revenues from high quality tourism for stakeholders as well as the protection of the World Heritage

Site. Under this plan, possibilities of donations to fund nature and educational projects from the tourism sector or visitors are to be investigated as well as cooperation with companies in the regions as donors or multipliers. This publication constitutes a first contribution to this plan.



Currently the tourism sector in the Wadden Sea provides only little direct support to set up and maintain the described infrastructure and activities to allow people to enjoy nature sustainably, even though environmental aspects are widely included in manifold sustainability plans and programmes. The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, under the umbrella of the United Nations, lists for example as one criterion for hotels and tour operators: *“The business contributes to the support of biodiversity conservation, including supporting natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value”* (GSTC 2013).¹⁶ This does not necessarily mean a specific financial contribution to nature conservation, but at least a clear commitment

to support environmental issues actively. After all, investments made in nature as a basis for their business will have an added value and underline the tourism industries' efforts in sustainable tourism development.

Beyond the tourism sector as such, it is also the individual tourist who can and should actively contribute to nature conservation in protected areas. In many parts of the world, entrance or user fees (if properly collected, managed and spent for conservation needs) are of benefit for nature, help to ensure long-term stability in sustainable tourism use, and are not seen as an unreasonable burden by the majority of tourists and travellers (PWC 2006).¹⁷ Taking the World Heritage factor into account, the typical visitor seems to be financially better off and to spend more money within the destination than the average tourist. As they are exceptionally interested in the unique value of the chosen World Heritage Site, they even stay longer and are more interested in how they personally could contribute to its preservation and sustainable development (CWSS 2009).

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- 5 It should be mentioned that the fundamental argument of the “polluter pays principle” is not restricted to cases where the sector concerned depends on intact nature, such as in the case of tourism in the Wadden Sea. The argument is also applicable to other economic sectors using natural resources of the Wadden Sea, though this will not be elaborated in this document.
 - 6 Criteria D3.4 of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC): latest version available on www.gstccouncil.org
 - 7 According to a study conducted for EUROPARC Germany in 2006, 84% of the respondents regard a nature tax as appropriate to contribute to nature conservation in national parks (NATIONALPARKAMT SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEINISCHES WATTENMEER 2007).

The acceptance of financial contributions and a willingness to pay a certain amount for nature conservation is given among visitors, as surveys conducted in Germany show. Asked whether they consider it appropriate that visitors of national parks in general contribute to the financing of the parks through, for example, a nature tax, 81% of the survey participants answered yes (WWF GERMANY 1999). In a recent survey conducted among visitors of the German North Sea region, 36% of the participants would be personally willing to support nature conservation at their holiday destination with a small financial input (NIT 2014).

Against this background it needs to be discussed if and how to achieve a more balanced participation of Wadden Sea users and visitors to protect the national parks and the World Heritage Site (see REBANKS CONSULTING 2009).



3

INSTRUMENTS, MECHANISMS AND FINANCING SCHEMES

and their applicability to the Wadden Sea



■ The Wadden Sea is not the only protected area dealing with the challenge of appropriate and sustainable financing. Most protected areas worldwide suffer from a lack of money for nature conservation (see CBD 2013, DRUMM 2007, IUCN 2006, SIEGRIST 2014, WWF 2009). Therefore, various financing schemes and payback mechanisms have been developed to gain income from the tourism sector without putting tourism business at risk.

Potential addressees of fees or taxes can be tourists themselves, tour operators, hoteliers, tour guides and (major) tourism companies. Depending on the type of addressee, the financial mechanisms can, for example, be divided into the following categories⁸:

- Entrance Fees
- User Fees
- Voluntary Contributions and Donations
- Concessions for Operations in the Protected Area
- Taxes and Fiscal Instruments
- Trust Funds

In the following sub-chapters 3.1 to 3.6, these six categories will be described, underlined with international good practice examples and (where applicable) already existing approaches in the Wadden Sea.¹⁹ As there is an enormous variety of potential funding mechanisms and their implementation, the choice can only be exemplary to be extended by further readings (see chapter 6).

8 Financing mechanisms can be categorised in different ways, e.g. by type of contribution, addressees, (non) governmental schemes, from public to private or direct and indirect sources. Some mechanisms could even be listed in more than one category – e.g. voluntary donations channelled into a trust fund or an overall foundation. In cooperation with marketing departments of tourism organisations and nature conservation bodies further new ways of payback schemes can be developed for a very unique destination and its visitor profile.

9 A brief survey conducted by WWF Germany in 2011 among the main Wadden Sea stakeholders from the conservation side about tourism-related fees shows only a small number of financial contributions channelled into nature conservation and management.

Two relatively new initiatives regarding mechanisms on ecosystem accounting and financing are currently under development and implementation, and also partly address the tourism sector: the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB). Both demonstrate in

one or another way the economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystems and can be seen as policy instruments for sustainable development (see IASS 2012, WWF DCP 2013, BFN 2012, UNEP 2013). Examples of PES projects and TEEB initiatives carried out with the support of WWF can be found in the "References" chapter.¹⁰

3.1 ENTRANCE FEES

■ Entrance fees are a common and widespread instrument to contribute to nature conservation and management costs in protected areas (see IUCN 2006, SIEGRIST 2014, WWF 2009). In addition, entrance fees can be used to channel visitor flows or to allow access to selected sites with limited capacity. This type of fee requires entrance or collection points, which can either be places or institutions. Entrance fees are generally also suitable for protected areas without physical barriers and official driveways, as for instance information points or visitor centres can serve as fee collection points.

General aspects of entrance fees:

- Common and widespread instrument (worldwide known)
- Relatively easy to collect (through collection points)
- Short to medium-term mechanism
- Can be used to manage demand between PA* sites (visitor management)
- Corresponds to the visitors' willingness to pay for nature conservation
- Administration and spending of funds can be managed and controlled by PA authorities
- Legislation needs to be considered

* Protected Area

Resources: SIEGRIST 2014, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2013, IUCN 2008, DRUMM 2007

10 One example is a study analysing the economic value of Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therein the potential future value of tourism linked to Virunga's landscapes and wildlife is estimated at US\$ 235 million annually (WWF INTERNATIONAL & DALBERG 2013).

NATIONAL PARKS IN THE USA

- 133 of the 401 US national parks charge an entrance fee, which is considered very normal there. Usually there is also a typical entrance structure there. There is a US\$ 80 annual pass that provides entrance to all national parks. Also, in 2014 there are a few entrance-fee free dates such as Presidents Day weekend in February or Veterans Day in November.

🔗 www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm

GALÁPAGOS NATIONAL PARK (ECUADOR)

- The fee system is tiered depending on age, nationality and residency of the tourist. For example, tourists that are non-residents of Ecuador and over 12 years old pay US\$ 100 whereas Ecuadorian tourists and foreign nationals that live in Ecuador and are over 12 years old pay US\$ 6. The entrance fee needs to be paid upon arrival at the airports of the Galápagos Islands and is valid for one year.
- The money collected through the entrance fee is used above all to finance the conservation of biodiversity of the terrestrial and marine flora and fauna. Additionally, it benefits the local community by improving basic services, education projects, sports, health, environmental sanitation, environmental services and services directly related to tourists.
- The Directorate of the Galápagos National Park is responsible for administering the process of fee collection for entry of tourists into the Galápagos. This includes for example the control of daily deposits, monthly payments and delivery of the fee to each of the beneficiaries in compliance with the Organic Law for Sustainable Development of the Province of Galápagos and its implementing regulation.

The Galápagos National Park provides transparent communication to the public regarding the collection and spending of fees¹¹ via website and reports (see GALÁPAGOS NATIONAL PARK 2014).

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11 In 2011 the entry fee was distributed as follows:
40% Galápagos National Park, 25% Municipalities,
20% Provincial Council, 5% Marine Reserve,
5% Inspection and Quarantine Service,
5% Ecuadorian Navy
(see 🔗 www.galapagospark.org/nophprg.php?page=programas_turismo_tributo).

BUNAKEN NATIONAL PARK (INDONESIA)

- The fee system implemented in Bunaken National Park is a park entrance fee collected mostly from divers representing the majority of tourists visiting the marine park. Entrance fee tags are available only on site and can be bought at official ticket counters on the islands or from the marine tourism operators. National and international visitors are charged differently: Indonesian visitors pay Rp 1,000–2,500 (~€ 0.06–0.15), foreign tourists pay Rp 50,000 (~€ 3) per day or Rp 150,000 (~€ 10) for an annual ticket. On average € 150,000 per year are gained via the entrance fee system (see BUNAKEN NATIONAL PARK 2013, BUNAKEN ENTRANCE FEE 2013, DIVE NORTH SULAWESI 2013).
- The money collected is used for conservation programmes, including enforcement, conservation education, waste management and environmentally-friendly village development (80%) as well as local, provincial and national government (20%). The entrance fee system in Bunaken National Park is mandatory and enshrined in law. With the help of the entrance fee, illegal fishing patrols and enforcement, village improvement programmes, rubbish collection, marine conservation education and reef and mangrove rehabilitation were financially supported and conducted (see WWF 2009).
- Established in 1991, Bunaken National Park was among the first protected areas that implemented a participatory management system for the park by the *Bunaken National Park Management Advisory Board*. It consists of 19 representatives from local communities, local government, private sector and university, a mixture of non-governmental and governmental actors. The board is, amongst others, responsible for design and implementation of the entrance fee system as well as for communication and coordination of park management activities among stakeholders.

Bunaken National Park is one of the most cited examples of conservation financing through tourism within a Marine Protected Area. The fee system has been adopted by a similar financing scheme in Bonaire National Marine Park and Washington Slagbaai National Park in the Caribbean (www.stinapa.org/naturefee.html).

In Bunaken National Park, it turned out that there was a lack of management competence within the board regarding effective coordination, stakeholder communication and financial management. Therefore a redefinition of the board was needed to ensure sustainable revenue generation over the following years (see WWF INDONESIA 2009).

ENTRANCE FEES IN THE WADDEN SEA

In general there are no entrance fees in a narrow sense occurring in the Wadden Sea. However, there are places, where some kinds of entrance fees need to be paid, e.g. from car-drivers to get access to the Hamburger Hallig in Schleswig-Holstein, a large saltmarsh area at the mainland. But as the fee is only charged from car-drivers, this type of fee is rather to be categorized as a user fee in chapter 3.2 of this report.

Another example is the so called "Kurtaxe", which is collected at the German Wadden Sea coastline to cover touristic costs. As this is used rather as a fiscal instrument, further

information on the "Kurtaxe" can be found in chapter 3.5.

A different type of entrance fee is taken by some of the visitor centres in the Wadden Sea Region, in particular the large ones, such as the Ecomare on Texel, the Welterbezentrum in Wilhelmshaven, the Multimar Wattforum in Tönning, the Erlebniszentrum Naturgewalten on Sylt and the Vadehavscentret in Vester Vedsted. These fees cover only parts of the touristic service the centres provide and can be seen as a contribution to awareness raising and education but not to nature conservation in the narrow sense.

TRANSFERABILITY ASPECTS OF ENTRANCE FEES IN THE WADDEN SEA



- Due to the large size and the openness of the Wadden Sea, a standard entrance fee for all visitors seems to be unlikely to be implemented. Technically seen, it appears difficult to control and to ensure, that everyone who entered the area has indeed paid the fee. Furthermore, it might be legally either very difficult or impossible to establish a general entrance fee for the Wadden Sea. And from a general perspective, it really might not be wanted by anyone.
- But still, an entrance fee could be used to provide visitor access on a rather local level to selected sites, for example areas with high biodiversity or attractiveness on islands or on the mainland coast. This might also be used as a tool to guide visitor flows.
- Existing infrastructure could be used as collection points for (local) entrance fees (e.g. visitor information centres).
- The expected revenue through (local) entrance fees might generally not be very high on the overall Wadden Sea level, but may help considerably to finance necessary conservation measures or nature information at selected sites.



Some visitor centers such as the Multimar Wattforum in Tönning, Germany, charge entrance fees to cover at least parts of the touristic service the centers provide.

3.2 USER FEES

■ User fees operate in a similar manner to entrance fees as they are collected directly from guests and tourists visiting the protected area. However, in comparison to an entrance fee, user fees are charged for selected protected area-related activities such as parking, camping or boating. User fees may also be connected to a species, such as gorillas or whales, which are the main attractions for guided tours. User fees are often charged additionally to entrance fees and can be separately collected and managed, e.g. by parking facility managements, NGOs or tour operators.

General aspects of user fees:

- Relatively easy to collect (through operator and provider)
- Short- to medium-term mechanism
- Demand-dependent
- Can easily be included in existing prices for services (e.g. tour packages)
- Diverse stakeholder participation (e.g. commercial operators, NGOs)
- Service and benefits are visible for the guests (awareness raising instrument)
- Amount of fees can contribute to visitor management and competition of providers

Resources: SIEGRIST 2014, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2013, IUCN 2008, DRUMM 2007

GORILLA VISIT FEE (RWANDA)

- As the gorillas in Rwanda became very famous because of gorilla expert Diane Fossey, their value in terms of attractiveness for guided tours increased. It was necessary therefore, on the one hand, to minimise negative impacts from tourists through limited guided tours and, on the other hand, it was possible to charge relatively high fees for visitors to view the gorillas in their natural habitat. Currently the costs for gorilla permits amounts to US\$ 750 per person for non-nationals, US\$ 375 for foreign residents and approximately US\$ 55 for Rwandan citizens. The regular entrance fee to the national park is included.
- The money generated through the Gorilla Visit Fee supports gorilla conservation activities and park management costs. The Gorilla Visit Fee is managed by the Rwanda Development Board and its Tourism and Conservation Office (see IUCN 2008, WWF 2009, RWANDA DEVELOPMENT BOARD 2013).

WHALE SHARK FEE (BELIZE)

- Visitors, who want to observe whale sharks in their natural habitat, need to pay a whale shark fee of approximately Bze \$ 50 (~€ 19) per day. In 2007 the annual revenue from this fee was about Bze \$ 146,000 (~€ 55,000).

- A non-governmental organisation, the Friends of Nature, is responsible for fee management and spending. The revenues are used for internal operational costs (20%) as well as for conservation activities (80%) such as the surveillance of whale sharks, 24-hour a day ranger patrolling programmes and funding for a tourism stakeholder group to support the implementation of best practices in the whale shark zone (see DRUMM 2007, IUCN 2008, WWF 2009, DESTINATIONS BELIZE 2013, FRIENDS OF NATURE BELIZE 2013).

OVERLAND TRACK FEE (TASMANIA)

- During the main walking season, from October to May, hikers on the Tasmanian Overland Track have to pay a user fee of A\$ 200 (adults) or A\$ 160 (children aged 17 and under and pensioners) in addition to the regular entrance fee to the national park. All revenue from the Overland Track fee is used for trackwork, hut maintenance, toilets, signage, interpretation and staffing and thus contributes to the long-term sustainable management of the track.

www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=27902#1

USER FEES IN THE WADDEN SEA

There are a few examples known in the Wadden Sea which constitute a kind of user fee for the use of nature and where the money is at least partly used for nature conservation.

One example is the Hamburger Hallig in North Frisia (Germany), which is a very large saltmarsh area on the mainland. Car drivers need to pay a fee of € 6 per car to pass the installed barrier to get to the end of the salt marsh (the actual Hamburger Hallig). The money collected is used for maintenance of the infrastructure and visitor information. It is important to note that pedestrians and cyclists are free of charge, which seems to be fair as they contribute to more sustainable mobility by using carbon-neutral means of transport. Bikes can be hired close to the barrier for a low price. This kind of user fee can therefore also be seen as incentive to use environmentally friendly means of transport.



Hamburger Hallig (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany): Driving by car is charged, cycling and walking is free – a good example of raising money for maintenance and visitor information and at the same time encourage a more sustainable way of transportation.

Another example of user fees can be found in St. Peter Ording (Germany). There is a parking system in place which provides parking space on beaches within the national park. The fee of €3–6 per day per car includes an amount of € 1.33 (2013) for the national park, which cover expenses for nature conservation at this site, such as monitoring or visitor information. The parking system in St. Peter-Ording was created as a compromise following a heated debate in earlier years: while for conservation reasons there should be no parking at all within the national park in St. Peter-Ording, for tourism reasons the local municipality would have preferred to designate even more parking places for sun-seeking tourists (see www.st.peter-ording-nordsee.de and www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/sites/default/files/media/pdf/SH-NPN-2003-05-06.pdf).

In the Netherlands there is a discussion about the introduction of a user fee in the context of a plan for water sports in the Wadden Sea. In this country there is also a private initiative working on a 'smart wad' system, a digital infrastructure in which you can pay for services for example by smartphone. From any purchase a small part

is planned to go to the management of the Wadden Sea (MICHIEL FIRET, personal communication, December 26, 2013).

In all three Wadden Sea countries there are moreover various types of guided tours on offer either for fixed prices or recommended donations, mostly to the tidal flats but also through salt marshes and dunes or as boat trips, for example to seal banks. These offers are provided both by commercial operators (e.g. private nature guides or boat trip providers) and by non-profit organisations such as Nature NGOs or visitor centres. While in the latter case the money generated is channelled into nature conservation and can thus be considered a user fee, this is usually not the case with private entrepreneurs where the money constitutes private income.

TRANSFERABILITY ASPECTS OF USER FEES IN THE WADDEN SEA

- There might be a number of other places in the Wadden Sea comparable to the examples of Hamburger Hallig or St. Peter-Ording, where a user fee could be taken for the less sustainable uses of the area.
- User fees can be used as an awareness raising tool showing tour operators and tourists the necessity of nature protection when using certain parts of it.
- The system of user fees for guided tours offered by nature NGOs or visitor centres is quite well-developed in the Wadden Sea. However, the quantity and the range of offers might well further increase in future.
- User fees can easily be included as a certain proportion of the actual costs to be paid for tour packages or single tours, and are therefore suitable for tour operators or private guides.
- User fees could be combined with other financing schemes and could also be channelled into a trust fund or into the currently discussed Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation (see chapter 3.6).



3.3 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS

■ Because protected areas and World Heritage Sites in particular offer fascinating and often unique experiences to their visitors, some tourists and tourism operators are willing to voluntarily pay a certain amount of money. These so-called voluntary contributions are harder to calculate than entrance or user fees regarding the amount of money, the frequency and number of potential payments. The collection of voluntary contributions can be done via bank accounts, by web-based tools or on the ground through donation boxes at selected places or at special events.

General aspects of voluntary contributions and donations:

- Often small-scale and short-term donations
- Revenues are difficult to predict (frequency and number of payments, amount)
- Relatively easy to implement (needs in the narrow sense only to set-up a bank account)
- Voluntariness is attractive for a certain group of (individual) donors
- Can be used as a market instrument (also short-term and flexible)
- Risk of "greenwashing" (e.g. companies)

Resources: SIEGRIST 2014, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2013, IUCN 2008, DRUMM 2007

LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS GALÁPAGOS (ECUADOR)

- Guests travelling with Lindblad Expeditions (a large cruise ship operator travelling to natural and remote places) are asked to make voluntary donations to support the conservation of Galápagos National Park. Since 1997, more than US\$ 4.5 million has been collected from ship passengers to preserve the flora and fauna of the Galápagos. All donations are collected by the Galápagos Conservation Fund and spent on projects in the Galápagos area, ranging from the removal of invasive species to supporting the national park's patrol boats.
- An independent board decides on the spending of funds and directs them to local projects implemented by the Galápagos National Park and Charles Darwin Research Station. The company itself does not contribute to nature conservation by monetary donations. Lindblad Expeditions established the Galápagos Conservation Fund and serves as a collector for donations made by its guests (see IUCN 2008, WWF 2009, LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS 2013).

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE WADDEN SEA

All Wadden Sea visitor centres offer the possibility to make voluntary contributions and donations after a regular visit or at special events. In most cases the money collected is used for cost covering the visitor centre itself or for conservation activities on the local site. Collection boxes are often designed in a special way and clearly marked. However, this kind of contribution usually only covers minor parts of the actual costs of the visitor centres.

Some nature NGOs who offer guided tours in the Wadden Sea (e.g. Schutzstation Wattenmeer in Schleswig Holstein) do not charge a user fee in a narrow sense, but ask their guests to make a voluntary donation for the tour.



Tourists are also requested to make voluntary donations of smaller and larger sizes via bank transfer, for example to nature NGOs¹² or to the administration bodies of the Wadden Sea National Park or to foundations and "friends of" organisations close to them. For example, in Lower Saxony all the latter three options are possible (Nationalparkverwaltung, Förderverein Nationalpark Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer e.V. and Niedersächsische Wattenmeerstiftung).

Visiting groups and school classes also occasionally make voluntary donations, often collected at charity events, and thereby support nature conservation activities at selected sites.

Some organisations offer guided tours for voluntary donations instead of charging a regular participation fee. Donations on top of a regular fee could help increase the money raised for conservation.

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¹² The work of nature NGOs for the protection of the Wadden Sea in all three countries is essentially based on voluntary contributions and donations of their members and supporters. However, most of this is not related to tourism.

TRANSFERABILITY ASPECTS OF DONATIONS IN THE WADDEN SEA



- The infrastructure of already existing visitor centres in the Wadden Sea region could be used in a more professional way to increase the fundraising efforts there, also with respect to the common World Heritage status.
- Calls for voluntary donations can be made according to special events and are therefore a flexible mechanism.¹³
- Instead of voluntary contributions for guided tours, there could be a price with this and incentives for donations on top of it.
- Commercial tour operators could support voluntary contributions for Wadden Sea protection on top of the actual price of their offers.
- The amount of money collected through voluntary donations from tourists is hard to predict, but could certainly be higher than today.

3.4 CONCESSIONS FOR OPERATIONS IN A PROTECTED AREA

Restaurants, hotels, guesthouses, (gift) shops and further institutions and companies providing services to visitors often need concessions for their operations in protected areas. Charges have to be paid by the companies and can be set up on a fixed or percentage basis related to the companies' income.

General aspects of concessions:

- Can be used by PA authorities to form and strengthen partnerships with the private sector
- Flexible in terms of pricing (fixed amount or percentage related to the companies income)
- Require previous (environmental) assessments to avoid negative impacts
- Legislation needs to be considered

Resources: SIEGRIST 2014, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2013, IUCN 2008, DRUMM 2007

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13 Other typical voluntary donations could be made through add-ons to tourism-related bills (e.g. €0.50 or €1 donations) or by "pay per click" events via social media or short messages services.

NATIONAL PARKS OF SOUTH AFRICA

- The South African National Parks (SAN Parks) award concessions to private operators in the accommodation sector as a part of their commercialization strategy. Currently 16 concessions are listed, for example in Kruger National Park and in Addo Elephant National Park. Contracts with private operators are made for 20 years and therefore describe a long-term vision of this revenue generation scheme.
- The total income to the SAN Parks from tourism concessions is hoped to be more than US\$90 million over 20 years. The money is intended to be spent on conservation issues by SAN Parks. The management of the concessions is carried out by the SAN Parks administration (see IUCN 2008, SAN PARKS 2013).

PUBLIC LAND CONCESSION FEES (NEW ZEALAND)

- In New Zealand, all national parks, reserves and conservation areas are managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). The DOC awards about 3,500 concessions on public conservation land to private companies including charges for huts, campsites, guided tours, agriculture or filming in all categories of protected areas. Thereby the DOC raises around €15 million annually – the single fees are connected to the income of the concessionaire and individually fixed. The revenue generated is mainly used to maintain tourism facilities, such as pathways and signposts, and to ensure high quality for users of public conservation areas (see IUCN 2008, NEW ZEALAND DOC 2013).

GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK (AUSTRALIA)

- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in Australia collects an Environmental Management Charge (EMC) associated with most commercial activities, including tourism operations (GBRMPA 2014A, GBRMPA 2014B). In doing this, daily visitor fees, boat or hotel concessions are combined and directly transferred as one charge to the Marine Parks Administration. The funds are used for the management of the Marine Park, including education and research, site planning, ranger patrols, reef protection, etc. The financial year 2009–2010 shows about A\$7.5 million of EMC payments (approximately 18% of the annual operational budget for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority).

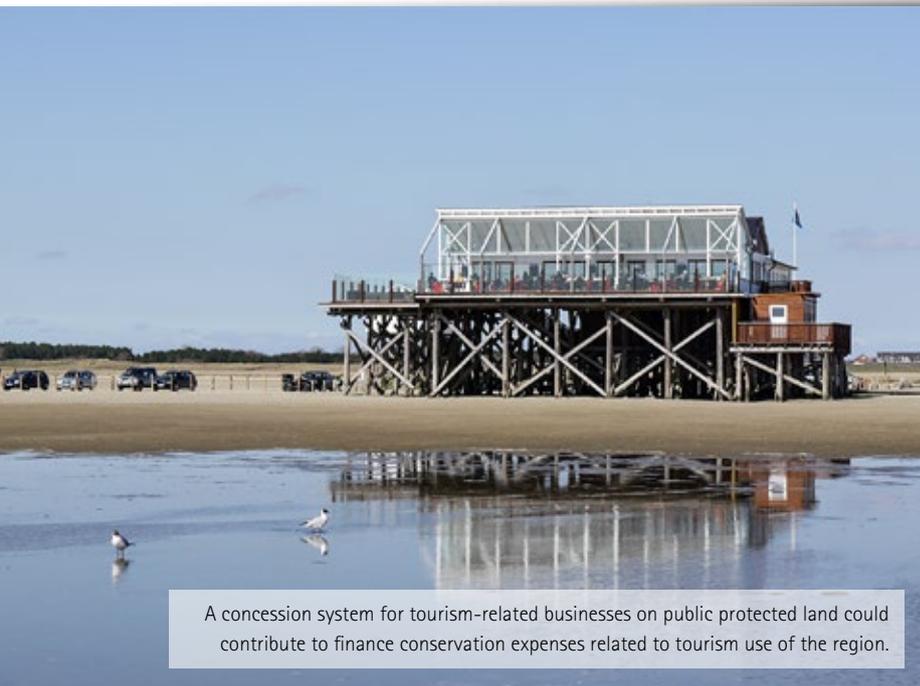
In this context, Namibia's example of community conservancies shall briefly be mentioned. Having the right to manage and distribute benefits from all wildlife resources in their area, community conservancies are a unique type of self-governing body who also make use of diverse financing mechanisms to let tourism support nature conservation. For example, approximately 10% of revenue from every lodge operating within the area is guaranteed for the community conservancy (see WWF GERMANY 2013B).

CONCESSIONS IN THE WADDEN SEA

The vast majority of accommodation, restaurants and souvenir shops in the Wadden Sea region are not situated within the protected areas. However, other tourism enterprises such as boat tour operators, ferry operators, air plane companies, event organisers and "Strandkorb" rentals often carry out their business on public land or within the protected area. So far there are almost no cases known of the concept of

tourism-related concessions with the money (or at least some of it) used for conservation purposes being applied in the Wadden Sea.

An interesting case is the "Nationalpark Partner" programme in Germany, which is based on a kind of mutual support and advantages for both the protected area and tourism entrepreneurs who take part (see NATIONALPARK PARTNER SH 2013, NATIONALPARK PARTNER NDS 2013, VIABONO 2013). It requires a certificate regarding the environmental performance of hotels and restaurants in the Wadden Sea destination. Some Wadden Sea specific conditions must be fulfilled and a small fee needs to be paid by each partner. The National Park Partners are then allowed, for example, to advertise with the national park, they receive information material, and they have the opportunity to take part in workshops and seminars for free. All in all, these partnerships are no concession in the strict sense of its definition, but can be seen as an investment of the tourism industry in supporting the national park idea.



A concession system for tourism-related businesses on public protected land could contribute to finance conservation expenses related to tourism use of the region.

TRANSFERABILITY ASPECTS OF CONCESSIONS IN THE WADDEN SEA



- For all the many tourism businesses situated in the Wadden Sea destination, but not explicitly within the borders of the conservation area, this kind of financing mechanism is not applicable.
- For those tourism businesses which use public protected land in the Wadden Sea (both on land and on sea, and belonging to different categories of protected areas) a concession system could be implemented.
- The collection of concessions needs reliable administration and might be carried out by competent authorities or institutions for the respective protected area.
- If concessions are given to run a business in or close to sensitive areas of the Wadden Sea, a sound assessment and clear terms of references safeguarding the natural values need to be done in advance.

3.5 TAXES AND FISCAL INSTRUMENTS

■ So far, taxes and other fiscal instruments related to the tourism sector mainly affect accommodation and transport businesses. National tax authorities charge for example hotels, bus companies or airlines by law. Usually, taxes are directed into a common fund, regardless of their origin and further spending. Nevertheless, internationally a few tourism-related conservation taxes can be found.

General aspects of fiscal instruments:

- Needs governmental support
- Governmental infrastructure can be used
- Suitable only for selected businesses (e.g. accommodation, transport)
- Use of funds might not only be for nature conservation purposes

Resources: SIEGRIST 2014, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2013, IUCN 2008, DRUMM 2007

MISSOURI CONSERVATION SALES TAX (USA)

- As long ago as 1976, Missouri introduced a state-wide sales tax of 0.05 % on all sales of tangible personal property or taxable retail services. Revenues generated by this kind of tax must be used only for conservation issues and cannot be spent otherwise (according to the Missouri Supreme Court). The Department of Conservation administers the funds, channelling them into control, management, restoration, conservation and regulation activities of the state's wildlife resources (see IUCN 2008, MISSOURI DOC 2014).

HOTEL TAX (EASTERN CARIBBEAN)

- The two groups of tropical islands called the Turks and Caicos have decided to use 1% of a 9% hotel tax as a conservation tax. The revenue from this tax is channelled into a conservation trust fund, the Turks and Caicos National Trust Fund. It generates annually about US\$ 30,000. This 1% of the hotel tax is used to support the maintenance of the country's protected areas in general. Projects include environmental education, visitor management and the support of scientific research. The Trust is managed by the Coastal Resources Management Project as part of the Ministry of Natural Resources (see IUCN 2008, WWF 2009, TURKS AND CAICOS TOURISM BOARD 2013, TURKS AND CAICOS MARKETING 2013).

FISCAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE WADDEN SEA

Although the legislation in Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark is different, there seem to be no taxes or fiscal instruments in place which are tourism-related and at the same time used for conservation issues. The so called "Kurtaxe" in Germany is usually charged by the tourist board of the municipalities

concerned and mostly connected to the number of overnight stays (see TOURISMUSZENTRALE EIDERSTEDT 2013). In the Netherlands, a similar kind of tourist tax is charged in some municipalities (HERMAN VERHEIJ, personal communication, December 4, 2013). So far, this kind of tax is not used for nature conservation activities to a larger extent, except for a few cases such as beach cleaning activities or local cooperation with nature conservation NGOs in public information activities or visitor centres.



In most places in the German Wadden Sea visitors have to pay "Kurtaxe" to get to the beach. A share of this tax could be used for tourism related conservation measures.

TRANSFERABILITY ASPECTS OF FISCAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE WADDEN SEA



- Taxes can only be implemented by public authorities, must have strong governmental support and need to be thoroughly planned and discussed with the tax-collecting authorities.
- In many places, in particular in or close to the German Wadden Sea, the instrument of a kind of tax to cover tourism costs is already implemented (e.g. "Kurtaxe"). Therefore a possible extension of this tax with a nature fee-part (with or without a certain increase of the tax) could be discussed. However, it must be considered that the "Kurtaxe" might be legally earmarked for tourism infrastructure and not all municipalities charge it.
- In the other countries it could be checked – given the experiences with the German example – whether such a tool would be legally and politically feasible or not.
- To ensure spending on nature conservation activities with the help of a tourism-related tax, a combination with a trust fund such as the planned Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation could be an option.

3.6 TRUST FUNDS

Trust funds are usually non-governmental and set up to collect money from individuals, organisations, governments or companies in order to provide financial resources for specific purposes, such as biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Contributions directed into trust funds can only be used for a specified purpose and must therefore be kept separate from other sources of money. Trust funds need

a medium- or long-term perspective to really be successful and can be used as an effective mechanism for mobilizing larger amounts of funding, for example from international donors. They are managed and controlled by independent boards, which may consist of NGO and private sector representatives as well as individuals to ensure proper spending of money.

General aspects of trust funds:

- Multi-stakeholder approach (might strengthen stakeholder participation)
- Needs to have definite and strong management
- Administration costs need to be considered
- Amounts of funding can be collected from diverse sources (e.g. international donors, national governments, foundations, private sector, individuals etc.)
- Clear use of funds (in this case for nature conservation)
- Can provide sustained and long-term funding
- Awareness raising through marketing and communication among all stakeholders and donors

Resources: SIEGRIST 2014, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2013, IUCN 2008, DRUMM 2007

CARIBBEAN BIODIVERSITY TRUST FUND

- In 2008, eight Caribbean countries* launched the Caribbean Biodiversity Trust Fund (CBF) jointly with partners as the German Development Bank (KfW), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. The initial budget was US\$ 40 million. The annual payout is channelled to independent national conservation trust funds in these eight countries.
- The money shall be used to effectively conserve and manage at least 20% of their near shore marine and coastal environment by 2020 (THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 2012). The management of the Caribbean Biodiversity Trust Fund is based on a CBF Secretariat (one staff), a Board of Trustees (majority non-government boards) and a Board of Observers from the donating countries and organisations.
- The Caribbean Biodiversity Trust Fund provides additional funding to protected areas and does not replace current government funding. Within a two-year timeframe each participating country is asked to create new conservation financing mechanisms (e.g. tourism fees) as matching funds (1:1 to its endowment proceeds). As the CBF is a relatively new financing mechanism, details on successful management and proper spending of funds are awaited (see CONSERVATION FINANCE 2012).

* Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

TRUST FUNDS IN THE WADDEN SEA

There are already trust funds in place for the support of the Wadden Sea. In particular there is the *Wattenmeerstiftung* in Lower Saxony. In Schleswig-Holstein a trust fund for the protection of the Wadden Sea is planned. The *Waddenfonds* in the Netherlands (WADDENFONDS 2014) also seems to belong to this category. In addition, there are a number of private trust funds which also fund selected conservation projects in the Wadden Sea.

Currently, the idea of a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation is being discussed at the trilateral level of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. At the Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in February 2014 it was decided, "to consider establishing a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation, aiming to make a decision before 2015" (CWSS 2014B). At the present time, the structure, sources of money and also the exact purpose of the foundation are still rather unclear. However, it seems probable that the tourism sector is among those who should (and hopefully also wants to) contribute to the foundation.



A World Heritage Trust Fund could help finance, among others, visitor information and visitor management.

TRANSFERABILITY ASPECTS OF TRUST FUNDS IN THE WADDEN SEA

- The recognition of the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage Site provides a unique opportunity to set up a new and determined foundation. This could support nature conservation activities in the entire area beyond those possible within the limited core nature conservation responsibilities of the governments.
- The purpose of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation could also include the support of the transformation process of the tourism sector towards sustainability, for example by funding activities from the action plan of the trilateral sustainable tourism strategy (CWSS 2014A) which support conservation.
- The purposes of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation could also include activities which would communicate, educate and market the Wadden Sea to the public and therefore raise awareness for this unique landscape, which would in return also be supportive of the tourism sector.
- The Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation could be designed in a way that it would be able to collect money from tourism sources. It could also provide tools from the local level that would encourage the collection of money. Therefore, a part of the financial basis of the foundation could originate in the tourism sector (see also 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5).



CONCLUSIONS

4



■ Regarding the present situation in the Wadden Sea region, the given examples of tourism-related financial contributions to nature conservation in the area are mostly single initiatives, more or less known and communicated, and mainly of a relative small scale. So far, a national or trilateral financing scheme to obtain additional and reliable conservation funding from the tourism sector is not in place.

The presented international case studies of successful financing schemes (which are just examples, there are many more), combined with the already existing examples in the Wadden Sea, may well be used as a start for discussions among stakeholders. This should also be done with the view to going beyond local or regional initiatives and tools (without neglecting them) and to develop joint mechanisms for the entirety of the World Heritage Site where appropriate.

To choose the right financial mechanisms for tourism-related contributions to nature conservation and visitor management in protected areas, they need to be carefully planned. To be successful they also need to be carefully managed and monitored (DRUMM 2007, IUCN 2008, CBD 2013). In addition, a check and comparison of country-specific laws and legal frameworks is needed, for instance if fiscal fees or taxes should be introduced either in the medium- or in the long-term. It also needs to be decided upon which cases to focus on trilateral, national or local ways of revenue generating and further spending.

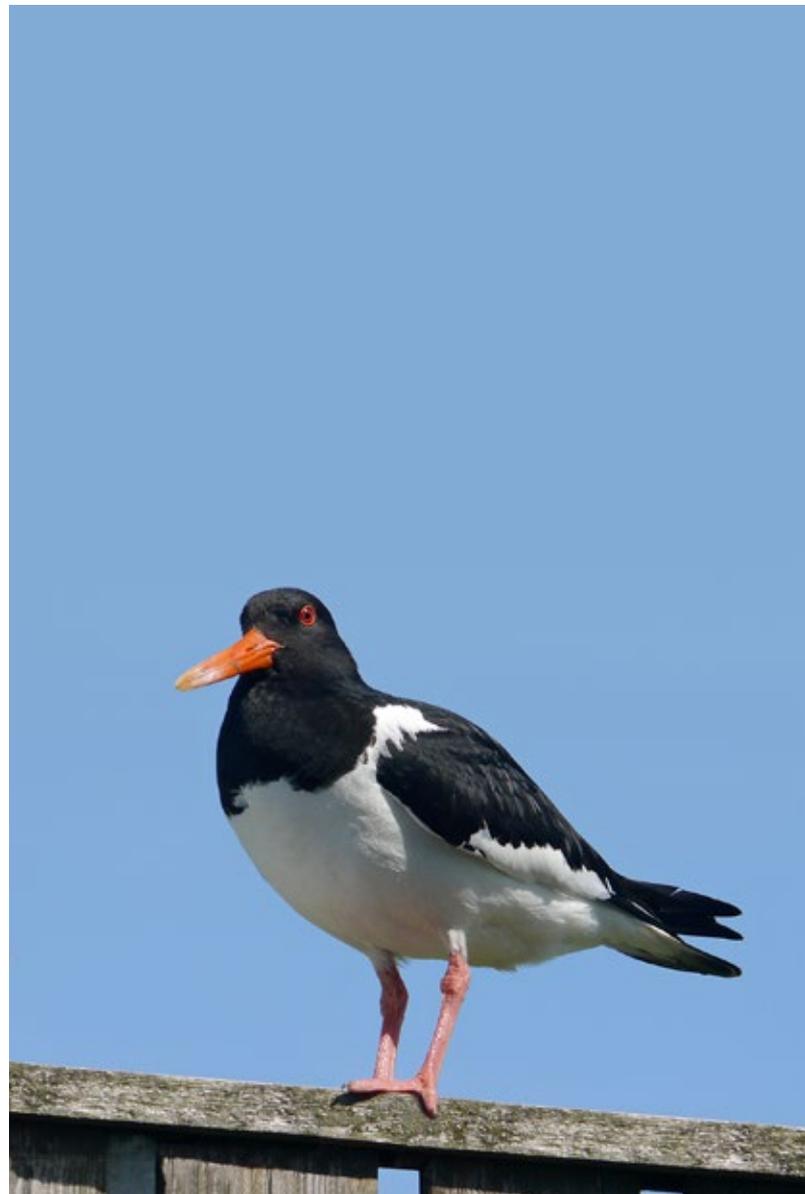
When it comes to the concrete configuration of tourism-related financing schemes, management, distribution and investment responsibilities need to be discussed and determined – accompanied by a solid financial plan. In some cases a preparation and testing phase in selected areas, or for a certain time frame, should be taken into account before introducing the tourism-related financing scheme.

All steps to be carried out need transparency and communication among the stakeholders and with the public. This is of great importance to win confidence and support of stakeholders, communities and tourists in all three Wadden Sea countries. And, of course, all mechanisms have to comply with nature conservation goals in the Wadden Sea.

Regardless of these potential new resources of money to be used for nature conservation, the public sector budgets must remain the core of permanent funding for the Wadden Sea protected areas as a clear governmental responsibility. This is important to have in mind, particularly with a view to the challenges ahead to allow nature to proceed in an undisturbed way in the Wadden Sea, to restore lost biodiversity, and to adapt to climate change (CWSS 2014B, RÖSNER 2010). Therefore, a strong partnership and commitment of all stakeholders in the region is needed to ensure support for nature conservation in this very unique place with its outstanding universal value.

Generally, all six financing schemes presented in this compilation seem to be transferable and adaptable to the Wadden Sea, though some are clearly preferable and others should be dismissed. The challenge will be to choose the right ones, single or in combination (GBRMPA 2014A, B), to adopt them to the needs of the Wadden Sea, to ensure the generation of a reasonable amount of money and also not to set up inappropriate barriers for tourists and the tourism industry.

The Wadden Sea World Heritage listing offers a unique opportunity to plan and implement tourism-related financing mechanisms by the long-term partnership of the three countries (the Trilateral Cooperation), by the current sustainable tourism development process (in particular the joint sustainable tourism strategy), and by the intention to create a joint financial tool such as a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation in the years to come. The existing trilateral and national stakeholder groups could serve as initiator and communicator for these tasks, involve further actors in the individual countries, and should discuss and agree on appropriate measures.



WWF'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Contributing to Nature Conservation through Tourism in the Wadden Sea



■ The protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site requires money; more than is available today. It is a reasonable assumption that those who benefit from unspoiled nature should contribute to the financing of its conservation. This is certainly true for the tourism sector in the Wadden Sea, which to a large extent depends on nature, as well as for the individual tourist, who enjoys recreation in an unspoiled environment. Therefore, it is appropriate for them to contribute both morally and financially to the long-term protection of the Wadden Sea.

To put this forward, WWF commissioned this compilation and used the input to develop a set of five recommendations. These, however, intend to respect some principles. Among them is that visitors should have broad opportunities to enjoy nature in the Wadden Sea, as long as this is fully in line with conservation goals. There should also be benefits for the most sustainable tourism uses and for people living in the region. Additional bureaucratic exercises should be avoided, if possible, and money for conservation should be made available in a relevant amount. The money preferably should come from individual tourists and from businesses, while it is important that tourism organisations focus on moral support for the protection of the Wadden Sea.

1

Entrance fees for visitor centres and areas of special interest

Whereas public access to nature should generally remain free of charge, entrance fees in larger visitor centres (that also constitute relevant tourist attractions) are a reasonable and widely accepted financial contribution and should be kept up as sources of income. New entrance fees for very special places with a particular high biodiversity or general attractiveness should be considered, especially if there are costs required for accessibility and recreational use, for example for boardwalks, observation towers or staff providing visitor guidance and information.

2

User fees as compensation for less sustainable use of nature

Tourism should generally be as sustainable as possible and in line with conservation aims. In cases where nature in a protected area is used for tourism reasons in a less-than-possible sustainable way (e.g. access to the beach by car instead of by foot or bicycle) and where unsustainable uses can for whatever reason not be avoided (with avoidance always being the preferred option), a user fee should be charged to encourage a more sustainable alternative. Also if a tourism use of nature that is not in line with protection goals but exceptionally permitted (e.g. mega-events such as large concerts or world cups in protected areas) a user fee should be charged to the event's operator. Also, it must be obligatory that operators pay for the necessary protection measures alongside the events.

3

Concessions for commercial use of nature

A good number of tourism businesses operate within the protected area of the Wadden Sea, such as operators of boats, ferries and air traffic as well as event organizers, equipment rentals or restaurants. Even if they do this in a proper way in line with conservation aims and sustainably, nature within the protected areas is still being consumed for commercial tourism interests. In these cases a concession with an appropriate levy should be required. In the case of National Park Partners and / or World Heritage Partners, a reduced rate for the concession could be discussed as these partners also contribute in other ways to the protection of the area.

4

Voluntary contributions by individual tourists

There are already voluntary contributions by tourists today, for example as a donation for guided tours or instead of entrance fees in visitor centres. The potential, however, is currently certainly not used to its full extent and a more professional and World Heritage-focused fundraising scheme for both the visitor centres and the tourism sector (tourist information offices, restaurants, hotels, local transportation, etc.) could help generate considerably more donations. It is also suggested to make special fundraising tools available for those who agree to take part in such schemes.

5

Wise use of funds from the local to the trilateral level

Different stakeholders in different local, national and international contexts have different opportunities to raise money in the tourism sector and from the individual visitor. To ensure the best possible protection of the entire Wadden Sea, the money raised should be shared (following clear rules and agreements) among local, regional and trilateral conservation purposes, whether this is administered by nature administrations, municipalities, non-governmental nature organisations, regional trust funds or – particularly important – a trilaterally based trust fund such as a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation. As the latter does not exist yet, it needs to be developed and implemented as a credible conservation foundation. WWF would like to underline this as an instrument of particular value for people and organisations to identify with and to express support for the World Heritage Site as a whole.

WWF hope that the recommendations will find broad support as they are, or, after appropriate discussion, will be modified in a constructive sense. But in the end it is important that nature conservation and tourism see it as joint responsibility to raise funds that will help to improve the protection of the Wadden Sea!

To implement the recommendations, the existing trilateral, regional and local stakeholder groups should serve as initiators and communicators, involve further actors, and prepare appropriate measures. However, it is very important that they are supported in this role by the Trilateral Governmental Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and its bodies and by national governments.

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All Websites have been visited in the period October 2013 to March 2014.

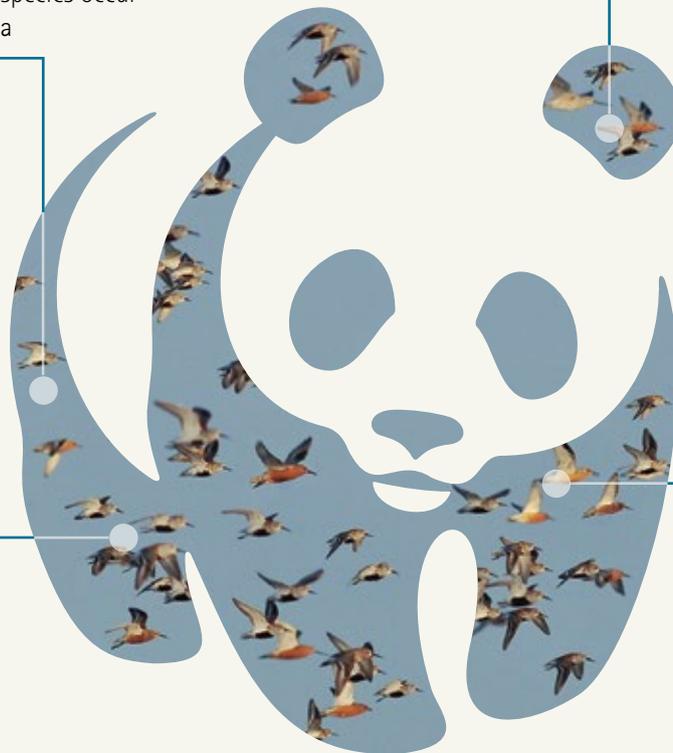
The Wadden Sea in short

10 MILLION

waterbirds use the Wadden Sea as a staging site along the East Atlantic flyway

10 000

animal and plant species occur in the Wadden Sea



35 YEARS

years of WWF's engagement for the Wadden Sea have made a difference

4500

square kilometres of seafloor fall dry twice a day during ebb tide



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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THERE IS A PLACE – WHERE HEAVEN
AND EARTH SHARE THE SAME STAGE

Photo: Deff Westerlamp



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