

Wadden Sea World Heritage

Media & Press Kit

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World class

One Wadden Sea – One Global Heritage

The Wadden Sea is located in the southeastern part of the North Sea. It stretches 500 km along the North Sea Coast of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, shaped by undisturbed natural processes.



In 2009, the Dutch-German Wadden Sea was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List, which underlined the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the area and recognised the progress made in protecting and managing it for more than a generation. Five years later, in 2014, the UNESCO Committee expanded the World Heritage Site to also include the Danish Wadden Sea. The UNESCO World Heritage status is the highest possible award for a natural site. It recognises and acknowledges its outstanding global importance. At the same time, the inscription can be a tool to help preserve the area for the benefit of present and future generations.

What is so outstanding and universal about the Wadden Sea?

1. Landscape taking shape in front of your eyes: Nowhere else on the planet such a diverse and dynamic coastline can be found over such a large area. The landscape is continuously being shaped by wind and tides. These natural processes have created and still create islands, sandbanks, channels, mudflats, gullies, saltmarshes and dunes.

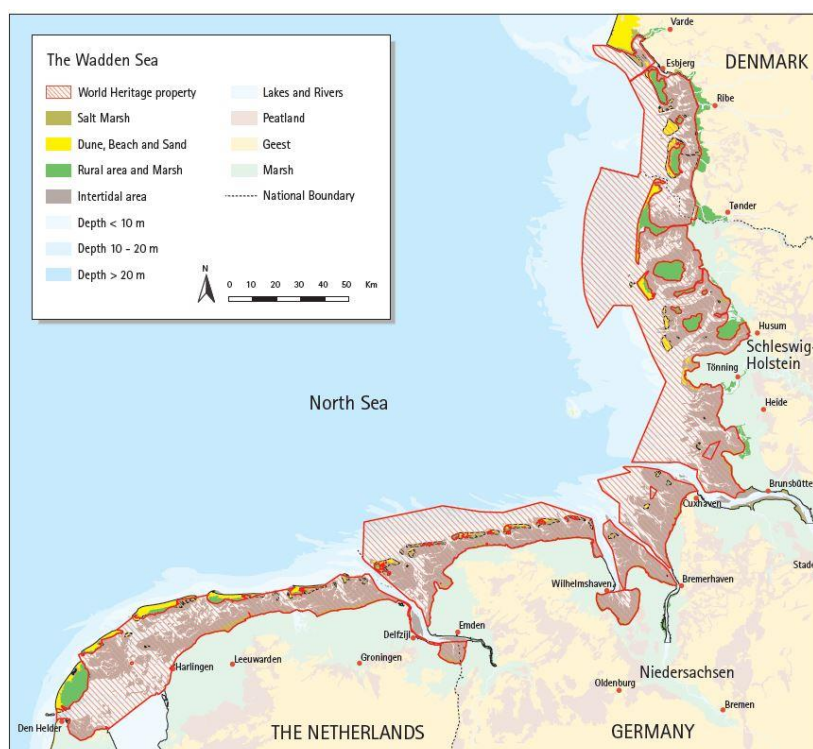
2. Natural forces and dynamics provide an invaluable record of the past and ongoing dynamic adaptation of plants, animals and coastal environments.

3. Biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea: Despite its tranquil appearance, the Wadden Sea World Heritage is the largest wilderness in Europe and one of the main hotspots of biodiversity in the world. The Wadden Sea sustains over 10,000 species of plants and animals. The productivity of biomass is the highest in the world and offers ample food for fish, seals and birds. In addition, it plays an indispensable role well beyond its borders: the richness of local species is crucial for the 10–12 million migratory birds that make a stopover in the area on their journey to their wintering or breeding grounds.

4. Complete and intact: Thanks to the species, habitats and natural processes, the Wadden Sea is a highly dynamic natural environment. As the Wadden Sea is protected in all three countries that it borders on, the area is large enough to ensure the preservation of this unique ecosystem.

5. Well protected across borders: Protection and management of a World Heritage property must be effectively secured. The current environmental quality of the Wadden Sea is the result of over 40 years of joint nature protection efforts by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. These states work together to ensure the integrated management of the area and the protection of one inseparable ecosystem that knows no borders – a joint responsibility towards the world community and for the benefits of present and future generations.

In numbers



Coordinates:

N53 31 43 E8 33 22

Date of Inscription: 2009

Extension: 2014

Criteria: (viii)(ix)(x)

- The World Heritage site within the Wadden Sea area is about 500 kilometers long and has a surface area of almost 11,500 km². 7,667 km² is located in Germany, 2,550 km² in the Netherlands and 1,239 km² in Denmark.
 - The **German part** of the Wadden Sea World Heritage covers the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park, the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park and the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park. Parts of these parks lie in the North Sea coastal zone. Parts of the Ems-Dollard river delta, on the Dutch-German border, also belong to the Wadden Sea World Heritage. The **Dutch part** belongs to the provinces of Friesland, Groningen and North Holland. It encompasses the protected areas of the Dutch Wadden Sea, which have been designated in the Key Planning Decision regarding the Wadden Sea. The **Danish part** of the Wadden Sea World Heritage is located in the municipalities of Esbjerg, Fanø, Tønder and Varde, who manage the protected area. The Danish Wadden Sea National Park markets the site.
- About 75,000 **inhabitants** live in the Wadden Sea Cooperation Area (on islands), about 3.7 million inhabitants on the mainland in entire Wadden Sea Region.
- 10 million **tourists** per year with about 50 million overnight stays; 30 – 40 million day trippers every year. Turnover per year: EUR 2.8 – 5.3 billion.
- Home to around 10,000 different **plants and animals**. 6.1 million migratory birds at same time (in spring and autumn) – in total 10 to 12 million birds per year make use of the Wadden Sea region.

© CWSS

Events

Every year, countless events in the Wadden Sea area celebrate the area's biodiversity and the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage site. The activities listed below are only a small selection. For more information, visit www.waddensea-worldheritage.org.

Brent Geese Days

In April/May, huge flocks of brent geese can be observed at the Wadden Sea, as they prepare for the trip to their summering grounds. Since 1998, the small communities of the Halligen Islands, in cooperation with nature protection agencies and the National Park Service, have invited visitors to experience the impressive natural show of the departure of geese to the Arctic region. For more information, visit www.ringelganstage.de.

World Heritage Weekend

Every year in June, the World Heritage sites in the Netherlands, including the Wadden Sea, take part in the World Heritage weekend, with special activities and events for young and old. For more information, visit www.werelderfgoed.nl/en.

West Coast Vogelkiek

The "West Coast Vogelkiek" is a bird watching event along the Wadden Sea coast in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. Every first weekend of October, the nature protection agencies in cooperation with the National Park Service offer various opportunities to experience the vast amount of bird flocks under the professional supervision of biologists, national park rangers and reserve carers. The detailed program will be published in August under www.westkuesten-vogelkiek.de.

Migratory Bird Days

The Migratory Bird Days in the National Wadden Sea Park of Lower Saxony create another highlight. At the second week of October, within 9 days, more than 250 different events from Greetsiel to Cuxhaven, from Borkum to Wangerooge showcase the significance of the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Wadden Sea for the international migration of birds. For more information, visit www.zugvogeltage.de.

Sort Sol - Black Sun

A spectacle not to miss are the thousands of starlings creating black clouds at the evening sky at the Danish Wadden Sea. To celebrate their living art there are various events held in September and October. For more information, visit www.nationalparkvadehavet.dk/muligheder/sort-sol/.

World Heritage – so what?

Recognition and protection

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention is the most important instrument adopted by the international community for the protection of our cultural and natural heritage. Its aim is to help protect and sustainably preserve cultural and natural monuments of outstanding universal value. The road to the World Heritage List is long and time-consuming. Candidates must meet many criteria and ensure the sites' integrity and protection. Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have been working together since 1978 to protect and conserve the Wadden Sea. The three-country cooperation takes account of the character of the Wadden Sea as an inseparable ecological entity. This long-standing collaboration and its successes were prerequisites to the designation of the Wadden Sea as a transboundary World Heritage site in 2009. Above all, the title is a great recognition of the previous work and carried with pride. The status of the conservation areas did not change with the World Heritage title. No new regulations were introduced. However, with the title comes an obligation to all to protect the outstanding universal value of the Wadden Sea for future generations.

International profile

The World Heritage concept enjoys a high degree of popularity internationally. World Heritage sites are testimonies of past and present cultures, unique natural landscapes whose destruction would be an irreplaceable loss to all of humankind. Protecting them is therefore not the sole responsibility of a single state, but is the task of the international community. By being added to the list, the Wadden Sea is now part of a vast World Heritage network with enormous experience and intensive exchange of knowledge. Almost 1,100 World Heritage sites exist worldwide. 209 of them are natural sites, including the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef and the Danish-German-Dutch Wadden Sea. Further, in 2010 a network of 49 marine World Heritage sites was established, in which the Wadden Sea is the only marine site across three states to play a leading role in cross-border protection and management. In addition, the Wadden Sea Cooperation works internationally to protect migratory birds. Upon the request by the World Heritage Committee, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands founded the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative in 2014. The initiative is aimed at a stronger cooperation between the countries along the East Atlantic flyway, on which the Wadden Sea is a hot spot. Because without cross-border cooperation, effective protection of “globe-trotting” birds is not possible. Up to 12 million migratory birds annually recharge in the Wadden Sea. Thus, the area is significant to global biodiversity.

Sustainable development

With the World Heritage title, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation has set a stronger focus on the topic of sustainable development. In line with the request of the World Heritage Committee and in the framework of the Interreg project "PROWAD - Protect and Prosper" in 2011-2014, the Cooperation and representatives of the tourism industry and NGOs developed the strategy “Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination”. The local implementation of the strategy is currently underway. A key role is assigned to the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand value. The follow-up project “[PROWAD LINK](#)” started in September 2018 and will be funded through 2021 as part of the Interreg North Sea Programme. The aim of the new project is the further development of the Wadden Sea brand to strengthen the commitment of small and medium-sized enterprises from the region to the Wadden Sea World Heritage and thus to unlock the potential of natural sites as a driving force for sustainable development.

Projects & Partnerships

Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative

The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative has been launched to strengthen cooperation with other countries for the conservation of migratory birds, especially along the East Atlantic Flyway. Initially, 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.

www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/breeding-and-migratory-birds



Swimway Vision

The Swimway Vision focusses on involvement of stakeholders whose activities may have a direct or indirect impact on fish, such as researchers, commercial and recreational fishermen, water authorities, relevant governmental agencies and NGOs. Their signing of a supportive statement for the trilateral Swimway vision at the Leeuwarden Conference demonstrates their commitment and marks the start of the Swimway Vision.

www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/fish



PROWAD LINK – Protect & Prosper

The Interreg VB project PROWAD LINK aims to unlock the potential of natural areas as a driver for jobs and sustainable development. We will do this by working with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to develop nature as a brand to create benefits for both, SMEs and the environment. Partners in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom working with interested SMEs will use the “nature-business-benefit-cycle” concept to develop new, sustainable products and offers.

www.northsearegion.eu/prowad-link



International partnerships

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Park Banc d'Arguin

The twinning arrangement was signed during the Trilateral Governmental Conference 2014 in Tønder, Denmark. It provides a framework for cooperation with a work package that will include support toward the designation of Banc d'Arguin National Park as a Particular Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) under the International Maritime Organization regulation.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Republic of Korea

Since 2009, the Wadden Sea countries and Korea have been cooperating to enhance awareness of the need to protect tidal flat ecosystems worldwide. Almost 100 experts from the Wadden Sea region and Korea participated in this mutual exchange, which has reached over 1,500 persons at both sites.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Wash/ Northern Norfolk

The cooperation between the Wash/ Northern Norfolk Coast and the Wadden Sea area is based on the Memorandum of Intent signed in 1991. It is a Joint Initiative of English Nature and The Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea. Norfolk County Council is partner in the PROWAD LINK project.

www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/international-cooperation

Organisation

In the framework of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands take on the responsibility of preserving this irreplaceable ecosystem for the benefit of present and future generations.

Management

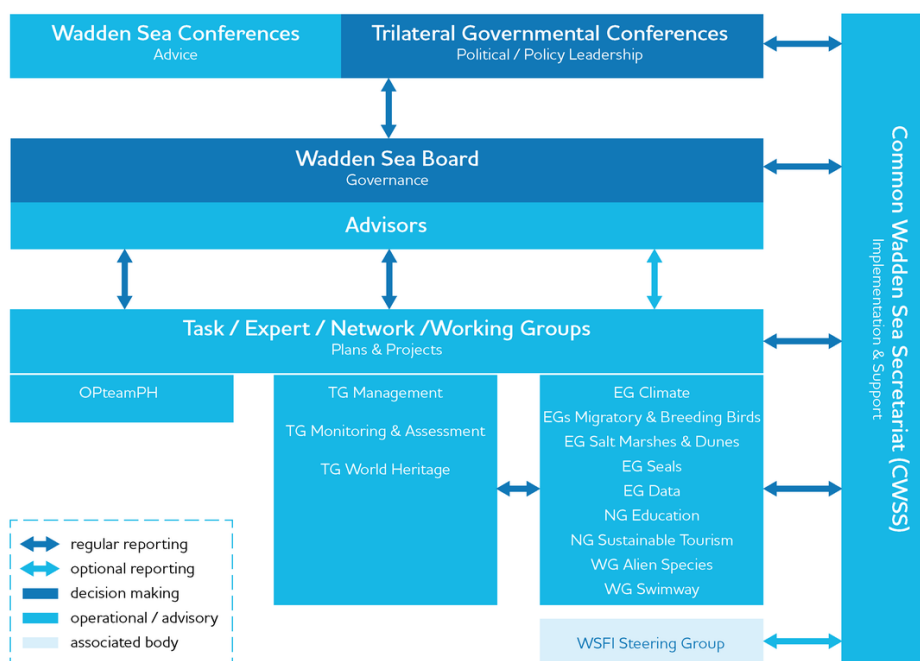
The Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan is the common policy and management plan for the protection and sustainable management of the Wadden Sea Area. It is also the common management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site.

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) established in 1987 and located in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, coordinates, promotes and supports activities of the trilateral Cooperation and is the central contact point for the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage.

The tasks of the Secretariat include

- coordination of the Trilateral Cooperation,
- organisation and support of ministerial conferences and meetings,
- communication and awareness building,
- monitoring data collection and assessment,
- project coordination, and
- contact with other international institutions.



Contact

Images can be found under the link:

www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/press-photos

Please note that these images can only be used in the context of reporting on the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

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