Wadden Sea World Heritage

Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation
German Presidency 2018 to 2022
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Shared responsibility for the Wadden Sea

The Wadden Sea is the largest connected intertidal sand and mudflat ecosystem in the world, where natural, dynamic processes continue to unfold largely undisturbed. It spans over 500 kilometres along the coastline of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands and is home to over 10,000 species of flora and fauna that have adapted to conditions constantly changing with the tide. Millions of migratory birds use

Record levels of harbour seals and grey seals

Due to transnational measures by the Wadden Sea states to protect harbour seals and grey seals after their decimation by intensive hunting at the beginning of the last century and two virus-related seal die-offs in 1988 and 2002, they have now stabilised at the highest levels since monitoring began in 1975.
the Wadden Sea as a stopover and roosting place on their journey along the East Atlantic migratory route, underscoring the Wadden Sea’s global importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The Wadden Sea states share responsibility for keeping this “Crown Jewel of the Ocean” and are committed to protecting and preserving it.
Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation

Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have worked together closely since 1978 to ensure the protection of the Wadden Sea, taking joint responsibility for preserving this one-of-a-kind ecosystem for the benefit of current and future generations. The goal from the beginning was to protect the Wadden Sea as an ecological unit and to preserve it as an ecosystem where natural processes can continue untouched. Targets agreed in ministerial statements, in particular the Joint Declaration and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan with its monitoring programme, form the foundation for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC).

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, established in 1987 and headquartered in Wilhelmshaven, coordinates the trilateral cooperation between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands on the protection and conservation of the Wadden Sea. The Secretariat was instrumental in the area’s nomination process for its listing as a World Heritage Site.
Wadden Sea World Heritage Site

The greatest achievement in the 40 years of the TWSC is the listing of the German-Dutch-Danish Wadden Sea as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This is the highest international recognition for a natural site and it is a well-deserved acknowledgement of the many years of trilateral conservation efforts. At the same time, this recognition reaffirms the transboundary obligation to protect the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and integrity, and to preserve it for future generations. The Wadden Sea is an important treasure, on the same level as other unique natural landscapes such as the Grand Canyon in the US or the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, also World Heritage Sites. In 2019, during the German Presidency of the TWSC, the Wadden Sea will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its listing as a World Heritage Site.
Scientific cooperation

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP)

TMAP is a joint survey and monitoring programme for the entire Wadden Sea, carried out in a harmonised way by each of the three countries. The information gathered in TMAP forms the basis for regular, scientific assessment of the ecological status of the Wadden Sea in the form of a quality status report (QSR). The findings flow into updates of the measures for preserving the Wadden Sea. The 2017 status report showed that, despite progress, much work remains to be done. Under the German Presidency, we want to help make TMAP viable for the future and compliant with the requirements of EU nature and marine conservation directives.
Scientific community
The TWSC cultivates exchange and cooperation with scientific and research communities in order to address the challenges posed by future developments that affect the preservation status of the Wadden Sea or the sustainable development of the region. The Trilateral Research Plan, drawn up by independent scientists, is an important basis for this.

Education
Educational outreach and public relations are important for acceptance and identification with the World Heritage Site. The trilateral partners make a contribution here with their visitor and information centres and also with the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) and the World Natural Heritage educational network. This work should be reinforced and expanded through partnerships and cooperation.

The Guiding Principle of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation is to “achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”.
International cooperation

From the start, exchange and cooperation with similar regions around the world were a major part of the TWSC. Currently there are partnership agreements with South Korea, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau. Regular exchange with other World Heritage Marine Sites takes place within the UNESCO Marine Programme. There are also joint activities within Europe, for example with the Dolomites World Heritage Site in Italy and the Wash, an intertidal region on the eastern coast of England. The goal is to strengthen and develop these mutually beneficial partnerships. International workshops involving representatives from other World Heritage Marine Sites are planned during the German Presidency.
Cooperation among partners

The countries of the TWSC work together closely with all partners involved in the protection of the Wadden Sea and with those who live, work and spend their leisure time in the Wadden Sea region.

With funding from the German government, the federal state of Lower Saxony and the city of Wilhelmshaven, a new Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Center is being built in Wilhelmshaven as a visible expression of the friendly cooperation of the three countries with all relevant partners and stakeholders in the region. The Center will house the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS), a partnership hub for cooperation with organisations and networks, and the administration of the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park. It will put wind in the sails of the TWSC.

Tackling future challenges together

The challenges the TWSC will face in future must be tackled jointly. How will climate change, warming temperatures and rising sea levels affect the Wadden Sea and how can we protect the area’s Outstanding Universal Value? How should the presence of invasive species and the arrival of new invaders be handled? What can be done with regard to the increasing volume of marine litter? How can more sustainable fishery be achieved in the Wadden Sea? How can the aims of both nature conservation and sustainable tourism be secured in the long term in the Wadden Sea? These issues must all be addressed whilst coping with the ongoing serious impacts caused by fertilisers and pollutants.
German Presidency of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation 2018 to 2022

In 2018, at the 13th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in Leeuwarden, Netherlands, Germany will take over the Presidency of the TWSC from the Netherlands for the next four years. The Presidency is tied to special responsibility for cooperation and the implementation of agreed trilateral targets. Germany can build on time-tested and proven cooperation between the federal states Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, and the federal government represented by the Federal Environment Ministry. During the German Presidency, Professor Karin Lochte, former director of the Alfred Wegener Institute for polar and marine research, will chair the Wadden Sea Board, the governing body of the Cooperation.
The focus of the German Presidency will include the following tasks:

→ Further developing partnerships and cooperation, including through the construction of the partnership centre and creation of a partnership hub;

→ Strengthening international cooperation;

→ Continuing development of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) to secure the Wadden Sea as a hub for the East Atlantic migratory bird route;

→ Ensuring the future viability of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP);

→ Drafting an overarching, integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site as required by UNESCO.
Further information

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Links

TWSC: www.waddensea-worldheritage.org

CWSS: www.waddensea-secretariat.org

QSR 2017: qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org

Wadden Sea National Parks (in German): www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de
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