Three countries – One Heritage
Managing a Shared Ecosystem

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
Wilhelmshaven, Germany
1. The Wadden Sea – how is it protected and managed?

2. Management challenges (stressors): Case studies fisheries and tourism

3. Some reflections
Wadden Sea World Heritage

- Largest unbroken stretch of mudflats world wide
- Highly productive ecosystem
- 10-12 mill. migratory birds pass through the area
- Shared by 3 countries

The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark
Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation

Guiding principle: “to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”.

- 1982/2010 Joint Declaration on the Protection of the Wadden Sea
- 1987 Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
- 1993 Monitoring Programme TMAP
- 1997/2010 Wadden Sea Plan
- 2009 UNESCO World Heritage Site
Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)

1. Criteria:
Geology, ecological processes, biodiversity

2. Integrity:
10,000 km² represents all habitats, species and processes

3. Appropriate Protection and Management
National Parks, nature reserves, Wadden Sea Plan, Monitoring (TMAP)
Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan

Targets:
- Landscape and Culture
- Water and Sediment
- Salt Marshes
- Tidal Area (tidal flats and subtidal gullies)
- Beaches and Dunes
- Estuaries
- Offshore Zone
- Birds
- Marine Mammals
- Fish

Regulations on:
- Agriculture
- Fishery
- Hunting
- Dredging and dumping
- Sand and clay extraction
- Tourism
- Shipping
- Energy (wind, gas, oil)
- others
Wadden Sea Fishery

Economic Importance
- Shrimp fishery, blue mussel fishery,
- About 500 ships with 1300 employees, high local economic relevance;
- Landings: 160,000 tons, 110 Mill. Euro

Blue Mussel Fishery
- Wadden Sea wide roughly 90 ships/licences (NL 80, D 12, DK 0)
- Blue mussel beds key feature of the Wadden Sea
- Impact on essential features – bottom, structures and biomass
Mussel Fishery: Policy and Management

Targets 1994

• An increased area of --- undisturbed tidal flats and subtidal areas
• A natural size, distribution and development of natural mussel beds

Trilateral policy and management

• permanent closure of areas (mussel fishery)
• mussel fishery limited to subtidal areas
• no enlargement of blue mussel culture lots
Management of Blue Mussel Fishery

Operational

• Protection of stable, long-living mussel beds
• Blue mussel management plans
• Permanent closure of areas for mussel fishery (map)
Blue mussel beds
In The Netherlands, intertidal mussel beds have recovered, but have not reached former levels. In contrary, mussel beds in Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark decreased in the last decade; considerable spatfalls (1996/97) have lead to establishment of beds at a large scale, whereas the establishment of new beds occurred only locally after this.
Uncertainties exist on the causes of recruitment failure (predation, climate change).

Source: Nehls et al. 2009
Management of Blue Mussel Fishery

The trilateral policy has apparently not worked effectively

European Habitats Directive
- Wadden Sea Natura 2000
- Activities and projects are subject to appropriate assessment
- Only agree if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site – no permit or terminate activity
Management Mussel Fishery – Changing Course?

Transition Mussel Sector Dutch Wadden Sea 2009-2020)

• Covenant between the state, mussel sector and nature conservation organizations – and others (shrimp sector)
• Terminate seed mussel fishery within a 10 year period by an annual staged reduction (from 40 mill kg to 0)
• Introduction of seed mussel installations (“smart farms”) financially supported by the state (the innovation part)
• Import of mussel seed from outside the (Dutch) Wadden Sea to compensate for temporary lack of seed mussels
• Mixed outcomes so far – partly success in terms of closed areas and stable mussel beds but risks related to seed import (alien species) and impacts of the smart farms not completely known
Management Mussel Fishery – Changing Course?

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea – Continuing the Policy until 2026

• Agreement between government and mussel sector in 2012 continued until 2026
• Limited to 8 ships and permits granted for a 5 year period provided a positive appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive
• No seed mussel fishery in the intertidal and zone 1; exemptions can be given in zone 1 if not sufficient seed mussel available intertidal
• Payment fee by the sector of € 280,000 annually for monitoring
• Mussel beds in the sub-littoral has significantly decreased; the import of seed mussels to compensate has been stopped by court decision
• Can this policy been continued? Niedersachsen part MSCertification, Danish part stopped following an appropriate assessment
Management Fishery – Changing Course?

Sustainable Fisheries – Agreement Wadden Sea Conference 2014

• Political agreement at the last Ministerial Conference to work towards a comprehensive sustainable fisheries scheme for the Wadden Sea
• Create a “level playing field” for nature and the fishery sector
• Agreement principles for sustainable fisheries for the Wadden Sea: No significant impact on the integrity and function ecosystem
• Using state of the art management a.o. assessment, best practises, closed areas, monitoring, stock assessment
• Implement these principles together with the sector starting in 2014, how has still to be discussed
• Many obstacles along the road – (stock) assessment, closed area.....
Tourism Wadden Sea Region

Tourism in the Wadden Sea Region

- 10 million tourists per year
- About 60 million overnight stays
- 30 – 40 million day trippers every year
- Various potential impacts (disturbance, habitat loss)

Turnover per year: 2.8 – 5.3 Billion Euro

Sources: QSR 2004 & 2009
Number of guests: Lower Saxony

Visitors East Frisian Mainland
Visitors East Frisian Islands
1. World Heritage Committee 2009: Develop a sustainable tourism strategy for the property
2. Tourism contributes to maintain the OUV and at the same time profit from the World Heritage designation
3. Enhanced cooperation between sectors and regions – create synergies and new opportunities (awareness, tourism management)
4. Benefits for all stakeholders from consistent World Heritage branding and coherent communication and marketing.

Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea
Wadden Sea World Heritage: Tourism and Recreation

- EU Interreg IVB project **PROWAD** – “Protect and Prosper”
- Total budget 1.3 Mio Euro
- Ministries, National Park Agencies, WWF, Tourism and Marketing Organizations in NL, D, DK,
- Development of a consistent sustainable tourism strategy for the entire Wadden Sea in a participatory approach (2012/13),

**Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy**

![Task Group Sustainable Tourism Strategy](image)
Analysis for each work fields

1. Tourism and nature conservation
2. Marketing and market research
3. Infrastructure: Transport, accommodation, gastronomy
4. Nature experiences and visitor information
5. Qualification and certification

**Strength:** well-developed tourism sector, valuation of nature values, pride of WH, joint WH-logo, good management

**Weakness:** OUV not understood, uncoordinated activities, limited possibilities for SME, high regional differences

**Opportunities:** Enhanced conservation and quality, synergies, consistency and credibility, global recognition.

**Threats:** WH not integrated, negative impact of tourism on OUV, lack of partnership, damage of WH reputation
OUV defines the Brand

“One Wadden Sea – one global heritage”

Brand Essence
- Committed
- Irreplaceable
- Inspiring
2: Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination
Nature conservation and sustainable tourism development go hand in hand across the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. This relationship is characterised by appreciation, understanding, experience and active participation of all committed partners.

People who visit, live or work in any part of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination are aware of and appreciate the ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ and the unique landscape. They are committed to preserving these assets for the benefit of present and future generations.

Local businesses and communities benefit both economically and socially from the high quality offers that support the integrity of the Wadden Sea and the ecological requirements of its World Heritage status.
4: Definition

Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea:

1. Is aware of the natural values of the Wadden Sea and accepts the global responsibility for its protection as a result of the World Heritage status.

2. Contributes to the protection, conservation and presentation of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property.

3. Promotes the cooperation with tourism stakeholders in a participatory approach to maximise conservation, and presents outcomes whilst minimising the threats and adverse impacts from tourism.

4. Presents the Wadden Sea World Heritage property in an adequate, consistent and comprehensive way, which mobilizes awareness, understanding and support for its protection.

5. Meets community and economic benefits for present and future generations while at the same time sustaining the conservation objectives.

6. Offers high quality, low impact tourism (products, services, facilities), which considers the ecological requirement of the property.

7. Contributes to regional development.
5: Strategic Objectives

1. To ensure all stakeholders have a **transnational understanding and appreciation** of the values of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

2. To ensure stakeholders take **responsibility for and contribute to the protection** of the ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ through involvement in **tourism management and product development**.

3. To ensure the tourism sector provides **consistent communication and marketing** and promotes the high quality tourism offers of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

4. To ensure nature conservation, tourism and local communities **benefit** from the World Heritage Status.

**12 commitments** to realize the objectives and an **Action Plan** (2014 – 18)
1. Ecosystem management is managing the human impacts and this approach should be inclusive etc. – but the Wadden Sea context has demonstrated the challenges related to the approach

2. Maintaining and enhancing the INTEGRITY
   • Include the central elements of the system
   • The processes and features of the system are included and understood by stakeholders
   • Do not suffer from adverse developments and impacts (also cumulative)

3. Stakeholders must take responsibility, support and buy-in to maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the ecosystem
THERE IS A PLACE – WHERE HEAVEN AND EARTH SHARE THE SAME STAGE

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