

# Preface

## Dear Reader,

This newsletter focuses on main activities resulting from the Governmental Conference in Esbjerg in 2001: the Wadden Sea Forum and the TMAP - the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program.

The Wadden Sea Forum - established as an independent forum for all stakeholders in the Wadden Sea area - continued the work in several thematic groups. The article describes the work contents of these groups and the results of the second Forum meeting in April 2003.

Several articles are related to the TMAP. The first one gives an overview of the current status of the TMAP, the results of two TMAP expert workshops, and introduces the contents of the new Quality Status Report (QSR) for the Wadden Sea which will be prepared in 2003 and 2004.

The second article by the Trilateral Seal Expert Groups evaluates methodological aspects of aerial seal counts which have been carried out trilater-

ally since 1989. A new, improved method is presented to assess the count data and to obtain a suitable and consistent index of population abundance.

Another article introduces a new marine research project, COSA, which may fill one of the most significant gaps in the TMAP which is the microbiological activity in the context of remineralization processes in the sediments of tidal flats.

The newsletter concludes, as always, with a list of new publications and a calendar of events.

Last but not least, the Annual Report of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat for the year 2002 is presented.

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