

Annual Report 2002

This Report presents a brief overview of the most important developments with regard to the trilateral Wadden Sea cooperation, and activities carried out by the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, CWSS, in 2002.

Implementation of the Esbjerg Declaration

The emphasis of the trilateral work was on the implementation of the agreements made at the 9th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Esbjerg 2001. In the following, a brief overview is given of the developments in 2002 regarding the trilateral projects and actions.

PSSA nomination and designation

At the Esbjerg Conference 2001, it was agreed to submit an application to the IMO to designate the Wadden Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). The application was elaborated as a joint trilateral application by representatives of the competent shipping authorities in the countries, the Trilateral Group for the PSSA Application, and delivered to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in June 2002, the first possible date after the conference in 2001.

At its meeting in London on 7 - 11 October 2002, the Marine Protection Environment Committee (MEPC), which is a committee installed by the IMO and responsible for designating PSSAs and Special Areas according to MARPOL, designated the Wadden Sea as a PSSA.

Wadden Sea Forum

The installation of an independent trilateral Wadden Sea Forum (WSF), in which all interested parties („stakeholders“) participate on an equal basis, was decided at the 9th Wadden Sea Conference. Mr. Nijpels, Queen's Commissioner of the Dutch Province of Fryslân, was assigned as chairman of the WSF.

In February 2002, a so-called Preparatory Committee, chaired by Mr. Nijpels, and consisting of representatives of the Wadden Sea states, the Interregional Wadden Sea Cooperation, the Fisheries sector, the Oil and Gas Producers, the Sailors Association and the Nature Conservation Organizations, prepared proposals for the working method and rules of procedure for the Forum.

The first meeting of the trilateral Wadden Sea Forum was held in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, on 30 August 2002. The meeting was attended by some 40 members, representing regional organizations for agriculture, fisheries, tourism, industry, energy, nature protection and local and regional authorities. National and federal govern-

ment authorities, as well as Wadden Sea advisory boards, were present as observers. The Forum elected as vice-chairpersons Mr. Andresen of the council of the Danish county of South-Jutland and Mr. Klimant of the government of the German District Dithmarschen. It was decided to install five of working groups (Thematic Groups), for agriculture, energy, fisheries, industry/harbor and policy/management. Tourism and recreation, as well as infrastructure and spatial planning, will be addressed by each of the groups. The first task of the groups will be to develop more concrete proposals and ideas regarding sustainable development, which will serve as a basis for discussions at the second plenary Forum meeting. The Wadden Sea Forum project receives financial support from the EU Interreg IIIB Program for the period October 2002 - June 2005 with a total budget of EUR 2,069,000. An important part of the self financing is delivered by the trilateral cooperation and the Inter-regional Wadden Sea Cooperation.

World Heritage Site Nomination

At the Esbjerg Conference 2001, it was agreed to continue with the consultation process on the nomination of the Wadden Sea Conservation Area as a World Heritage Site (Esbjerg Declaration §36). In 2002, the consultations were continued in Lower Saxony through an awareness campaign, public meetings, and discussions in the National Park advisory board. At the end of 2002, the state parliament unanimously decided to recommend the government to propose nominating the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea Conservation Area as a World Heritage Site. This decision was taken by the government in January 2003.

Also in Schleswig-Holstein, the consultations continued in the county of Nordfriesland, whereas the county of Dithmarschen already agreed to a conditional nomination in 2001. The consultations will continue in 2003 with a view to their finalization, as agreed at the Esbjerg Conference. The state government of Hamburg positively decided on a nomination in September 2001.

In the Netherlands, a first round of consultations has been concluded; a second and definite round will be held when more definite proposals have been prepared. In the Danish Wadden Sea Regions the national consultations have been concluded.

Landscape and Cultural Heritage / WADCULT

In 2002, a project coordinator was employed for a 6-month period to prepare a joint work plan for a LANCEWAD follow-up project as a basis for the elaboration of a common application for co-financing in the framework of the Interreg IIIB Program. The WADCULT held three meetings to discuss in particular the draft joint work plan which was finished in November 2002.

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program (TMAP)

Trilateral Monitoring & Assessment Group

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Group (TMAG) has the task to supervise and coordinate the implementation of the TMAP and to prepare assessment reports on the status of the Wadden Sea environment.

The TMAG had three meetings in 2002 and focused its work on the implementation of the Common Package of TMAP parameters including the associated data handling system and the preparation of an update of the QSR 1999, to be prepared in 2004 and submitted to the 10th Ministerial Conference in 2005.

Implementation of the TMAP

The large majority of the Common Package parameter groups were implemented as part of the regular monitoring program in the three countries. The still existing gaps for some parameter groups could not be implemented in 2002 because of financial reasons, e.g. macroalgae surveys in the Netherlands, salt marsh and dune surveys in Denmark, and monitoring of boats at sea in parts of Germany.

Technical preconditions for the implementation of a common TMAP data handling system in the Netherlands and Denmark were established in 2002 by employment of data handling experts on a project basis. In Germany, data handling projects were initiated in Lower Saxony and on the federal state level to be started in 2003. The work has been coordinated and supported by the trilateral data handling coordinator. Necessary technical modifications and adaptations of the data units and further developments in the data model of all parameter groups have been coordinated and agreed upon on the trilateral level. Monitoring data of chemical and biological parameter groups have been transferred into the data units. Because of organizational difficulties (e.g. security restric-

tions), not all data units are currently accessible via the Internet.

The Trilateral Data Handling Group (TDG) met twice to supervise and quality-check the work carried out at the Dutch and Danish data units and by the trilateral data handling coordinator.

Breeding and Migratory Birds

Within the monitoring programs of breeding and migratory birds, which are carried out in the framework of the TMAP, the agreed surveys were performed. The Joint Monitoring Group of Migratory Birds (JMMB) met twice, the Joint Monitoring Group of Breeding Birds (JMBB) met once in 2002. In both groups, the preparation of the next reports of comprehensive data was the main task besides the advisory function for the Wadden Sea Plan project No. 9.2.1 regarding roosting sites and the evaluation project regarding quality assurance activities for breeding bird surveys. There was no meeting of the TBBS group in 2002.

Seal Management Plan

The Trilateral Seal Expert Group (TSEG) coordinated and supervised the implementation of the trilateral monitoring activities of the Seal Management Plan (SMP) and supported the TSEG-plus with expert statements. The work plan for the implementation of the SMP was adopted by the TWG 2002-1. During coordinated flights in 2002, a total of 20,975 seals including about 4,700 pups were counted in the entire Wadden Sea.

In May 2002, a mortality amongst seals caused by phocine distemper virus (pdv) infection was identified in the Danish Kattegat area, the same virus, which also caused the death of a substantial part of the common seal population in Western Europe in 1988. The epidemic in 2002, also spread into the North and Baltic Sea Area and in total about 21,000 dead seals were registered in the entire infected area, and of these about more than 10,000 in the Wadden Sea. In 44 Seal Reports the secretariat informed the trilateral cooperation and the public continuously on the topical status and development of the epidemic between May and December 2002. In June 2002, trilateral seal experts and representatives of the scientific and management sector (TSEG-plus) discussed first the current status of the mortality and agreed to compile a scientific minimum investigation program for dead seals in case of an outbreak in the Wadden Sea and further activities. In November 2002, the TSEG-plus-plus discussed possible research and investigation programs regarding the pdv epidemic and agreed on the most important management questions and developed

criteria and standards which should be met by the concerned research programs.

Cooperation with other bodies

North Sea Conferences

A Statement to the 5th North Sea Conference was adopted at the Esbjerg Conference and submitted to the CONSSO meeting in January 2002. Most of the proposals in the Wadden Sea Statement were reflected in the Bergen Declaration of the North Sea Ministers in March 2002. The only exception is the issue of coastal protection and sea level rise which should be dealt with in relevant other forums.

Possible implications of the Bergen Declaration for the Trilateral Cooperation concern a.o. the evaluation of the trilateral Targets with regard to the Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQO) to be developed within the framework of OSPAR, in coordination with the development of marine indicators in the EEA and environmental objectives in the EU Water Framework Directive.

OSPAR Commission

The CWSS is observer in the sub-groups of the OSPAR Commission. However, because of time constraints, the CWSS did not participate in meetings in 2002.

Ems-Dollard

The sub-commission G of the German-Dutch Transboundary Water Commission held two meetings in 2002. The CWSS is observer in the sub-commission. In 2002, the sub-commission focused on the implementation of the joint management plan for the disputed area, elaborated in line with the Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan and the preparatory steps to designate the Hund-Paap sandbanks as a nature reserve, subject to a common nature conservation designation.

Wash-Wadden Sea Collaboration

The information exchange between the Wash/Northern-Norfolk coast was continued in 2002, in particular with regard to the seal epidemic. There were no activities with regard to specific projects in 2002.

Inter-regional Wadden Sea Cooperation

The Inter-regional Wadden Sea Cooperation (IRWC) is a collaboration of the Dutch Wadden Sea provinces, Wadden Sea regional authorities in Schleswig-Holstein and the Danish Wadden Sea counties. The collaboration is coordinated by an interregional coordinator located at the Ribe coun-

ty council in Denmark. A collaboration and close coordination of activities with the trilateral cooperation has developed.

Guinea Bissau – Wadden Sea Cooperation

The collaboration with Guinea Bissau continued in 2002 under the coordination of Wetlands International. An intermediary report of the activities in Guinea Bissau was delivered in April 2002. The intermediate report made clear that the activities were in accordance with the schedule and time table of the project. According to the schedule, the project will be finalized in April 2003.

Information and Communication

Publications in 2002

Esbjerg Declaration 2001

Ninth Trilateral Governmental Conference, Esbjerg, October 31, 2001. Policy Assessment Report. (in English, Danish, German, Dutch).

TSEG-plus Report March/June 2001

Common and Grey Seals in the Wadden Sea. Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 15 – 2002.

Shellfish Fisheries

An Overview of Policies for Shellfish Fishing in the Wadden Sea. CWSS 2002

Wadden Sea Newsletters

No. 26, 2002-No. 1

No. 27, 2002-No. 2

Homepage

All publications and additional information are available via the CWSS homepage (www.waddensea-secretariat.org). In 2002, the website was visited about 55,000 times resulting in 462,000 contacts.

Organizational Aspects

Chair

In the period from January 1, 2002 until December 31, 2005, the Trilateral Cooperation is being chaired by the Netherlands. On 1 January 2006, Germany will take over the presidency of the Trilateral Cooperation.

Senior Government Officials

The Senior Government Officials meetings have been installed to discuss trilateral Wadden Sea policy and to address issues of common interest between the Governmental Conferences. The officials were:

- Mr. H.R. Oosterveld, Director, Department North of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the Netherlands, chairperson;

- Mr. O. Christiansen, Deputy Director General of the National Forest and Nature Agency of the Ministry for the Environment and Energy, Denmark;
- Mr M. von Websky, Deputy Director General of the Department Nature Protection and Ecology of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany.

In 2002, one Senior Government Officials meeting was held. The meetings addressed in particular the work planning for the period 2002 – 2005, the seal epidemic, the PSSA nomination and the TMAP.

Trilateral Working Group (TWG)

The TWG, established for the preparation and elaboration of trilateral policy issues, consists, in principle, of representatives of the responsible ministries of each country and representatives of the German federal states and regional authorities in Denmark and the Netherlands. If necessary, the TWG is supplemented by representatives of other ministries and experts on special issues. The TWG was chaired by Mr. Arjen Bosch from the Department North of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. In 2002, the TWG met twice.

Since 2000, trilaterally recognized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with activities in the Wadden Sea region, have participated in the TWG. In 2002, the following NGOs participated in the work of the Trilateral Cooperation:

- Wadden Sea Team
- Seas At Risk
- International Association of Oil and Gas Producers
- North Sea Shrimp POs
- Europeche/COGEGA
- International Sailing Association
- Industry and Employers (since December 2002)

Expert Working Groups

In 2002, the following standing/ad-hoc expert working groups supported the trilateral cooperation:

- the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Group (TMAG) and the following subgroups of the TMAG:
 - the Trilateral Data Handling Group (TDG);
 - the Coordination Groups for the Joint Monitoring Program for Breeding Birds (JMBB) and
 - for Migratory Birds (JMMB);
- the Trilateral Seal Expert Group (TSEG);

- the TSEG-plus, consisting of the TSEG, supplemented with policy makers;
- the Working Group on Landscape and Cultural Heritage (WADCULT);
- the PSSA preparation group,
- the ad-hoc Wadden Sea Map Group.

Secretariat

The execution of the duties of the CWSS is, according to the Administrative Agreement for the secretariat, supervised by a committee of representatives. In 2002, it consisted of

- Mr. A. L. Bosch, Department North of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the Netherlands, chairman;
- Mr. A. Beck, National Forest and Nature Agency of the Ministry of the Environment, Denmark;
- Dr. L. Fiedler, Department of Nature Conservation of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany.

The CWSS is based in Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Its 2002-budget was EUR 484,500. The following persons were employed in 2002:

- Mr. J. A. Enemark, secretary;
- Mr. F. de Jong, deputy secretary;
- Ms. B. Reineking, deputy secretary;
- Dr. H. Marencic, deputy secretary;
- Ms. M. Polanski, administrative assistant;
- Mr. G. LürBen, data handling coordinator;
- Mr. M. Vollmer, LANCEWAD project coordinator (6 months), (since 15 December 2002, WSF project).

In addition to the participation in meetings and workshop as part of the above described activities, the CWSS employees took part in the following events:

- BSH Symposium, Hamburg, Germany, 5-6 June 2002;
- UBA Expert Workshop on Reference Conditions in the Wadden Sea with regard to the Water Framework Directive, Berlin, Germany, 29-30 June 2002;
- TMAP Lecture at the annual meeting of the German Society for Marine Research, Warnemünde, Germany, 8 November 2002;
- TMAP Lecture at the 4th German Seabird Symposium, Norden, Germany, 16-17 November 2002;
- Ramsar Conference, Valencia, Spain, 19-22 November 2002;
- EU Marine Strategy Conference, Køge, Denmark, 4-6 December 2002.