

Annual Report 2003

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 2003.

25th Anniversary of the Trilateral Cooperation

On invitation of the Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Mr. Cees Veerman, over 120 guests celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea at "Schloss Gödens" near Wilhelmshaven, Germany, on 22 October 2003.

Minister Veerman welcomed the Parliamentary State Secretary Ms. Simone Probst (Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany), Deputy Director General Mr. Jens Peter Simonsen (Ministry of Environment, Denmark), State Secretary Mr. Peter Knitsch (Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Agriculture of Schleswig-Holstein) and the Lower Saxon Minister of the Environment Hans-Heinrich Sander, as well as guests from science, policy and non-governmental organizations involved in the Wadden Sea cooperation. The keynote address was held by Peter Bridgewater, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention.

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 2003 regarding the trilateral projects and actions.

Wadden Sea Forum

The trilateral Wadden Sea Forum (WSF) is an independent forum with participation of all interested parties („stakeholders“) on an equal basis and is chaired by Mr. Nijpels, the Queen's Commissioner of the Dutch Province of Fryslân. The Wadden Sea Forum project receives financial support from the EU Interreg IIIB Program for the pe-

riod 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.

The Wadden Sea Forum held its third meeting at the Chamber of Commerce Oldenburg, Germany, on 30 – 31 October 2003. The Forum discussed the topical issues of the planning of offshore wind parks, shipping safety and sustainable shrimp fisheries. The topic of sea level rise was also addressed at the meeting and was considered a particular challenge for the Wadden Sea region. The results of a trilateral study into the possible impacts of increased sea level rise, carried out in 2001 by the trilateral expert group Coastal Protection and Sea Level Rise (CPSL), were presented to the Forum. The meeting was informed that the CPSL will continue its work with developing proposals for best environmental practices to cope with the anticipated impacts in a way which guarantees safety but is also compatible with the protection of the ecosystem.

The Forum has commissioned a number of studies on the social-economic situation of the Wadden Sea region. The analyses of the German and Danish Wadden Sea region can be downloaded from the WSF website www.waddensea-forum.org. First results of an integrated analysis of the national studies were presented at the meeting. In follow-up studies, the specific perspectives and opportunities for the region will be investigated.

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 2003, the national consultations continued. In Lower Saxony, on proposal of the state parliament, the government decided in January 2003

to propose nominating the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea Conservation Area as a World Heritage Site. The state government of Hamburg already decided positively on a nomination in September 2001. In Schleswig-Holstein, the consultations continued in the county of Nordfriesland, whereas the county of Dithmarschen already agreed on a conditional nomination in 2001. The environment ministers of Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein underlined again their support of the World Heritage nomination at their regular meeting in December 2003.

In the Netherlands, the consultations are ongoing. In the Danish Wadden Sea Regions, the national consultations were concluded with a negative result in 2001.

Coastal Protection and Sea Level Rise

The trilateral working group "Coastal Protection and Sea Level Rise" (CPSL) started its second work phase in 2003. The work was focusing on elaborating integrated coastal defense solutions, which stand a feasibility check on safety standards, natural assets (best environmental practices), cost-benefit, public acceptance, legal aspects, and "harmony" with other interests in the Wadden Sea.

The members of CPSL II represent coastal defense and nature conservation authorities in the three Wadden Sea countries. The group met four times in 2003.

Landscape and Cultural Heritage / WADCULT

In 2003, the elaboration of a LANCEWAD follow-up project within the framework of the Interreg IIIB Program was continued. The application was submitted in February 2004.

The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program (TMAP)

Trilateral Monitoring and 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 2003 and focused its work on the implementation of the Common Package of TMAP parameters including the associated data handling system and the prepara-

tion of a QSR Update 2004 which will be submitted to the 10th Ministerial Conference in 2005.

Implementation of the TMAP

By 2003, the large majority of the Common Package parameter groups were implemented as part of the regular monitoring program in the three countries.

Technical preconditions for the implementation of a common TMAP data handling system were established in 2003 by continuation of the data handling work at the four TMAP data units and at the CWSS. 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.

The filling in of chemical and biological parameter groups into the data units made good progress and were almost completed. Because of organizational difficulties (e.g. security restrictions), not all data units were accessible via the Internet by the end of 2003.

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.

In 2003, three TMAP expert meetings were organized. The TMAP salt marsh experts met twice (in May and October 2003), developed a common classification scheme for salt marshes (vegetation, grazing, drainage) and prepared the QSR salt marsh chapter. The TMAP blue mussel experts met in March 2003 and continued with the intercalibration of the monitoring methods especially the interpretation of aerial photographs and field sampling. The workshop agreed on procedures to deliver the GIS data to the TMAP data units and started the preparatory work for the QSR.

Preparation of the QSR Update 2004

The outline of the QSR Update was endorsed by the TWG in April 2003 and the preparatory work started by establishing a QSR Management Team (consisting of selected TMAG members) which are in charge of the overall coordination of the QSR work. A work plan was elaborated and a network of QSR authors was appointed. In autumn 2003, first outlines of the QSR chapters were delivered by the lead authors and endorsed by the QSR Management Team. For the chapter on chemical data (nutrients, hazardous substances), an automatic export routine was developed on the basis of the harmonized export files from the TMAP data units. A QSR website was established which con-

tained the available draft chapter and information on organizational matters. The QSR Management Team met four times in 2003.

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 in 2003. The Joint Monitoring Group of Migratory Birds (JMMB) and the Joint Monitoring Group of Breeding Birds (JMBB) met twice in 2003.

In both groups, the organization of the yearly surveys, the preparation of the regular trilateral data reports and the work on the QSR update 2004 were the main tasks. Furthermore, the JMMB published the report of the Wadden Sea Plan project No. 9.2.1 on high-tide roosts in the Wadden Sea (Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 17).

There was one meeting of the TBBS group in 2003 to organize the yearly surveys and to prepare a QSR chapter on the results of the Beached Bird Surveys.

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). The work plan for the implementation of the SMP was adopted by the TWG in 2002.

During coordinated flights in 2003, the maximum of seals counted during the moult period (August) amounted to about 10,800 animals. The maximum number of pups counted during the whelping period (June) was 2,956. Due to the severe seal epizootic in the summer 2002, the seal population decreased drastically compared to the previous year when 20,975 seals were counted.

In 2003, the proceedings of the international symposium on the management of North Sea Harbour and Grey Seal populations (November 2003) were published in the Wadden Sea Ecosystem series.

Cooperation with Other Bodies

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 2003.

Ems-Dollard

The sub-commission G of the German-Dutch Transboundary Water Commission held two meetings in 2003. The CWSS is observer in the sub-commission.

Wash-Wadden Sea Collaboration

The information exchange between the Wash/Northern-Norfolk coast was continued in 2003. There were no activities with regard to specific projects in 2003.

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 county 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 was carried out under the coordination of Wetlands International. According to the schedule, the project was finalized in April 2003.

Information and Communication

Publications in 2003

Management of North Sea Harbour and Grey Seal Populations.

Proceedings of the International Symposium at EcoMare, Texel, November 29 - 30, 2002. Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 17.

High Tide Roosts in the Wadden Sea – A Review of Bird Distribution, Protection Regimes and Potential Sources of Anthropogenic Disturbance

Joint Monitoring Group of Migratory Birds in the Wadden Sea (JMMB), Wadden Sea Ecosystem No. 16.

Wadden Sea Newsletters

No. 28, 2003-No. 1

No. 29, 2003-No. 2

The Wadden Sea – A Particularly Sensitive Wadden Sea Area (PSSA)

(Information Flyer in English, Dutch, German and Danish)

Coastal Protection and Sea Level Rise (CPSL)

(Information Flyer in English, Dutch, German and Danish)

The Wadden Sea – World Wide Unique. Map of the Trilateral Cooperation Area.

The Wadden Sea. Waddenzee – Wattenmeer – Vadehavet. Satellite Poster of the Wadden Sea

Homepage

All trilateral publications and additional information are available via the CWSS website (www.waddensea-secretariat.org). In 2003, the website was contacted by 50,000 users resulting in a total of 420,000 visited pages.

Organizational Aspects

Chair

In the period from January 1, 2002 to 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 Food Quality, the Netherlands, chairperson;
- Mr. O. Christiansen, Deputy Director General of the Danish Forest and Nature Agency of the Ministry of the Environment, Denmark; until autumn 2003,
- Mrs. Anne-Marie Rasmussen, Deputy Director General of the Danish Forest and Nature Agency of the Ministry of the Environment, Denmark; from November 2003;
- Department Nature Protection and Ecology of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany (position remained vacant in 2003);

In 2003, no Senior Government Officials meeting was held.

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 Food Quality. In 2003, 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 2003, 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

Expert Working Groups

In 2003, 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),
 - for Migratory Birds (JMMB); and the Trilateral Beached Bird Survey groups (TBBS)
 - the QSR Management Team (QSR-MT),
- the Trilateral Seal Expert Group (TSEG);
- the Working Group on Landscape and Cultural Heritage (WADCULT);
- the expert working group on Coastal Protection and Sea Level Rise (CPSL).

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 2003, it consisted of

- Mr. A. L. Bosch, Department North of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality, the Netherlands, chairman.
- Mr. A. Beck, Danish 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 2003-budget was EUR 505,900. The following persons were employed in 2003:

- 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. Lürßen, data handling coordinator;
- Mr. M. Vollmer, Wadden Sea Forum project,
- Ms. N. Hickman, administrative assistant, Wadden Sea Forum 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:

- Conference on Shipping Safety, Terschelling, 13 – 14 March 2003;
- Symposium Warning Signals from the Sea, Hamburg, 1 April 2003;

- Wadden Sea Island Conference, Wangerooge, 7 – 9 May 2003;
- Workshop on Water Framework Directive and Marine Conservation, Bremen, 17 May 2003;
- BSH Symposium Hamburg, 3 – 4 June 2003;
- Joint OSPAR-HELCOM Meeting, Bremen, 25 – 26 June 2003;
- Coastal Zone 03 Conference, Baltimore, USA, 13 – 16 July 2003;
- 5th IUCN World Parks Congress, Durban South Africa, 8 – 17 September 2003;
- Lecture at the Summer School of the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helgoland, 18 September 2003;
- Lecture at the Annual Meeting of the EUCC Germany, Buisum, 21 November 2003;
- Workshop EU- Project HIMON on Monitoring, Geesthacht, 24 November 2003;
- ICZM Meeting at the European Commission, Brussels, 8 – 9 December 2003.