

12th
INTERNATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC WADDEN SEA
SYMPOSIUM



Recommendations

General Preamble

Nature conservation and management in the Wadden Sea should, as formulated in the trilateral Guiding Principle, aim “to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”. Much has already been achieved in recent decades but the Wadden Sea is still facing issues of concern such as retarded recovery of biological diversity, the loss of salt marshes, and ongoing contamination with new chemical substances. There is also the need to develop strategies to deal with the consequences of global developments such as climate change and invasive alien species. Finally, in terms of policy and management, there is an increasingly complex system of international, European and national legal instruments and agreements which can both lead to confusion and/or work at cross-purposes. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a better integration in research, monitoring and management with timely involvement and participation of all stakeholders (researchers from various disciplines, government agencies, NGOs and other sectors). A similar holistic and integrative approach should be applied when exploring possibilities for EU-funding.

The Twelfth International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium discussed these issues under the title ‘Science for Nature Conservation and Management’. Given that the trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation serves as an example in the wider European or even global context, the symposium considered the following recommendations to be of strategic importance for the three Wadden Governments.

Recommendations to the Trilateral Governmental Conference

1. Develop one comprehensive scheme for the conservation and sustainable development of the trilateral Wadden Sea in order to implement the various EU Directives more effectively. Such a scheme will serve as an example for the wider EU. In this context it is important that:
 - a. The trilateral Wadden Sea is considered as a sub-region according to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and
 - b. The definitions of “Good Ecological Status / Favourable Conservation Status / Good Environmental Status” as respectively required by the Water Framework Directive / Habitats and Species Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive have to be harmonised to ensure that also the implementation of these Directives is harmonised.

- c. The Ecosystem Approach should be applied to Wadden Sea policy and management.
 - d. We must build on existing trilateral structures, agreements and instruments, including monitoring and data handling.
2. Extend the trilateral cooperation area by adding the adjacent off-shore conservation areas, because there is a strong relationship between the Wadden Sea and these areas and treat the inshore and near offshore areas as a single system.
3. The monitoring efforts of the trilateral area should not be restricted to the minimum requirements resulting from the Natura2000, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives as these do not provide sufficient information for a proper and scientifically sound ecosystem management of the Wadden Sea. Accordingly, the TMAP should be expanded to develop trilateral strategies and methodologies for monitoring and assessing the ecological values of in particular the subtidal area. Furthermore, a large effort should be given to the development of conservation objectives which underpin the whole management process.
4. Where necessary and possible restore the natural structure and functioning both to increase resilience to the impacts of accelerating sea level rise and to enhance sustainable economic development, taking due account of geo-morphological conditions.
5. The natural landscape of the Wadden Sea and the cultural landscape of the adjacent land area must be regarded as complementary parts of the same landscape. Therefore cooperation between the cultural and environmental heritage should be improved.
6. Governments need to join and reinforce ongoing international efforts to prevent alien species introductions and develop an alien species management strategy for the Wadden Sea.