

Wadden Sea Day '09

- Ambitious title suggested:
- **“40 years NGO work for the Wadden Sea – from Statements of Concern to Our Common Future to New Perspectives.”**
- But we'll go back 50 years...



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The Sixties:

Developments:

- 'Silent Spring' by Rachel Carson, 1962.
- Start of mass tourism in the Wadden Sea.
- Plans for land reclamation in the Netherlands.
- Plans for a new canal in the Dollard.

The Wadden Sea:

- Affected by industrial and maritime pollution.



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The Seventies:

Developments:

- 'Limits to Growth'.
- Growing recognition of cohesion of ecosystems.
- Growing concern about pollution, e.g. pcb's, accumulating in seals.
- Publication of 'The Wadden Sea'.
- NGO's propose dealing with the Wadden Sea on a trilateral basis. Statement of Concern.
- First Governmental Conference, The Hague , 1978.
- Informal involvement of the NGO's.

The Wadden Sea:

- Growing pressure from pollution, fishing and recreation.



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The Eighties:

Developments:

- Joint Declaration, 1982.
- Ongoing discussion on land reclamation.
- CWSS, 1987.
- Massive decline in seal population in '88.
- Start of exploration for oil and natural gas.
- Initiatives for environmentally friendly economy.
- National Parks in D.
- 'Our Common Future', 1987.
- Agreement on the Protection of Seals, 1988.
- Conferences in Bonn, Copenhagen, The Hague and Bonn again.

The Wadden Sea

- Gradual improvement of water quality.
- Growing impacts on natural values of fishing.



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The Nineties:

Developments:

- Consolidation.
- 'Common Future of the Wadden Sea'.
- Conferences in Esbjerg, Leeuwarden and Stade.
- Guiding Principle, 1991.
- Formalisation of cooperation between NGO's.
- Draft Brent Geese Management Plan, 1994.
- NGO's accepted as observers in the TWG.
- Wadden Sea Plan, 1997.
- NGO work on governance.
- European legislation.
- Growing concern about climate change.
- Debate about natural values/landscape.

The Wadden Sea

- 'Pallas' shipwrecked off the German coast (1998), no effective countermeasures.
- Decline of musselbanks.



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The Zero's

Developments:

- Sustainable Development – a threat to the cooperation?
- New approaches: WSF, WHn, ICZM, PSSA.
- Celebration of 25 years of cooperation, 2003, IWSS.
- Advisory Group on the Wadden Sea (NL), 2004.
- Cooperative effort of the Wadden Sea Forum: 'Breaking the Ice', 2005.



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The Zero's (*continued*)

- Conference of Schiermonnikoog.
- Review finalised, new structure proposed.
- Growing interest in cultural history and landscape.
- World Heritage status secured – congratulations!

The Wadden Sea

- Water quality generally improved (despite some residual pollution from sixties and seventies), growing problem of turbidity due to dredging in some areas.
- Another seal viral infection.
- Invasive species.
- Salt marshes improved/summer polders.



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Where are we now?

- We do have a great and growing Wadden Sea Community – all here today!
- We have a lot of research and monitoring going on and, thanks to the TMAP, long time-series of data.
- Management and protection measures have served the Wadden Sea well over the past few decades.
- The condition of the Wadden Sea has improved: the WH status has been granted.



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- **Where are we now?** *(continued)*
- So – now that we have the WH status, can we sit back, relax and enjoy the Wadden Sea?
- Is everything OK now?
- Well, of course we're NGO's: Never Grateful Organisations.
- No, we're not done, so yes, we will need to do a lot more work.



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Where should we go?

The next decades of the trilateral cooperation we'll have to deal with at least the following issues:

- *Climate Change.*
- *"It's the economy, stupid."*
- We will need to find solutions for the few *estuaries* that we have left in the Wadden Sea.
- *Denmark and Hamburg* will have to join the WH status – they simply can't afford not to!
- *Cohesion.*



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Climate Change

- The living Wadden Sea already acts as a crucial part of our coastal defence.
- Therefore we need to make sure that the ongoing natural development of the sea (it never has been static!) keeps this function.



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Wadden Sea Forum

- The perspectives for nature conservation, protection and restoration are intimately linked with the state of the economy.
- The trilateral cooperation will have to deal with the socio-economic development of the Wadden Sea Region. ICZM!
- The WSF will have to evolve into a cooperation similar to and complementing the trilateral cooperation in nature protection.
- The WSF is an instrument to promote sustainable development in the Wadden Sea Region.



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The Ems-Dollart estuary

- Everywhere the quality of estuaries is improving – except in the Ems-Dollart.
- Needs to be discussed at the trilateral level.
- A bilateral issue?
- How many countries have been involved in the WH exercise?
- If we leave NL and D/Ns to themselves there will never be a satisfactory solution.
- The trilateral community as a whole needs to ensure the restoration of the ecology of the estuary.



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Cohesion

- Wadden Sea Treaty?
- Separate development of WSP and national policies.
- Voluntary agreements, silky soft law.
- Socio-economic cohesion also lacking.
- Further integration of science and policy making needed.
- Common implementation of EU-directives.
- World Heritage – three sites?



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Conclusion

- We're moving in the right direction -
- But still have a long way to go.
- NGO's will continue to assist the cooperation:

- You'll never walk alone!

