

De Nederlandse, Duitse en Deense Waddenzee is vandaag in Londen door de International Maritime Organization (IMO) aangewezen als 'bijzonder kwetsbaar zeegebied'. Hieronder staat het persbericht zoals dat vandaag is uitgegeven door de IMO.

Voor vragen over het Nederlandse deel van de Waddenzee,

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Een PDF-kaart van de aangewezen zone is beschikbaar op www.venwnieuws.nl

THE WADDEN SEA DESIGNATED AS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SEA AREA

The Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea has been designated as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). The designation was agreed at a meeting in London, 7-11 October 2002, in the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is the UN organization responsible for the world-wide regulation of shipping.

Last year, the three countries agreed at the Wadden Sea ministers conference in Esbjerg in Denmark to apply for a designation of the Wadden Sea as a PSSA to the IMO. This application has now been honoured by the IMO. The area designated as a PSSA is basically the marine area of the Wadden Sea Conservation Area, being the Wadden Sea national parks in Germany and the Wadden Sea nature protection areas in Denmark and the Netherlands (see map). The PSSA covers an area of approximately 15,000 km².

The designation is not only a recognition of the Wadden Sea as a world wide unique nature area but also of the wide range of (inter-) national measures already taken by the Wadden Sea states to protect the area. The Wadden Sea PSSA will be included on the relevant sea charts. It will send a strong signal to and increase the awareness of the international shipping community of the particular sensitivity of the area against impacts from shipping. It will thus assist the countries in further protecting and using the area in a sustainable way. The PSSA designation will not be associated with new measures. It will not limit shipping in the area or the use of the Wadden Sea harbours. The major shipping routes have been excluded from the designation.

The Wadden Sea is the 5th designated PSSA worldwide, but the first designated on the basis of a joint application by three states and the first in Europe. Other PSSAs are e.g. the Great Barrier Reef, Australia, and the area "Around the Florida Keys", United States.

A PSSA is an area that needs special protection through action by the IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological or socio-economic or scientific reasons, and which may be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities. The Wadden Sea is an exceptional, highly dynamic tidal ecosystem of global importance, which is at risk to the impact of international shipping and other activities. The

adjacent North Sea is one of the world's busiest areas in terms of international shipping and therefore the Wadden Sea fulfils all criteria for a PSSA designation.

The Wadden Sea and the adjacent North Sea is already subject to an extensive regime of protective measures, consisting of both international and national regulations, that aim at reducing the impacts from and risks related to shipping. Examples of relevant measures are the MARPOL Special Areas against discharge of oil and garbage, routing systems making certain shipping routes compulsory for ships carrying hazardous goods and compulsory reporting for ships.

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