



# Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation: Four decades of success





## 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC).

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Forty years is a rather short time in historical terms, but the full significance of these four decades becomes evident against the background of the history of international environmental policy. The governments of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands joined forces for the protection of the unique marine ecosystem at their doorstep in 1978. At that time, a mere six years after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, Sweden 1972), international and European environmental law were still at an incipient stage and most of the related international legal instruments – including the groundbreaking “Rio Conventions” derived from

the 1992 Earth summit – had not yet been developed. The founders of the TWSC, therefore, acted with remarkable foresight. No less remarkable is the fact that throughout the 40 years of its existence the Cooperation, which is not underpinned by any instrument of international law and based solely on the political will of the three Wadden Sea states, has continually set milestone after milestone along the road to a favourable conservation status for the Wadden Sea. This enabled the inscription of the area on the UNESCO World Heritage List. You will find some of these milestones outlined in this leaflet, which we hope you will find interesting and inspiring.

**Rüdiger Stempel**  
Executive Secretary  
Common Wadden Sea Secretariat



## Milestones of Policy and Management

**1978**

First Trilateral Governmental Conference in The Hague

**1982**

Joint Declaration



**1987**

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) established



**1988**

Wadden Sea Seal Agreement – first regional agreement under UN on Migratory Species (CMS)



**1991**

Guiding Principle and Common Management Principles

**1994**

Common delimitation of Wadden Sea Area and Conservation Area, common ecological targets, Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme



**1997**

Wadden Sea Plan

**2002**

Designation of the Wadden Sea as PSSA under IMO



**2002**

Wadden Sea Forum commences its work



**2003**

The International Wadden Sea School, a network of Wadden Sea interpreters and education centres, is established (left)



**2010**

Revised Wadden Sea Plan and Joint Declaration

**2011-15**

INTERREG IVB project "PROWAD - Protect & Prosper" on tourism and nature conservation working together



**2018**

Development of a trilateral education strategy, "Shaping a Sustainable Tomorrow"



**2018**

40th anniversary of the Cooperation, celebrated at the 13th Trilateral Governmental Conference in Leeuwarden



## Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP)

TMAP covers the entire Wadden Sea area and spans a broad range of parameters from physiological processes and population development to changes in landscape and morphology. It provides the basis for periodic scientific assessments of the ecosystem and an evaluation of progress towards the ecological targets set out in the Wadden Sea Plan.

Images: (left) Martin Stock;  
(below) Jan Drent



## Milestones of Science and Monitoring

**1966**

Establishment of an International Wadden Sea Working group of scientists

**1975**

First International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium on Schiermonnikoog



**1975**

First trilaterally coordinated count of harbour seals

**1983**

Ecology of the Wadden Sea – the first publication that compiles the scientific knowledge of the entire Wadden Sea



**1988**

CWSS as European information hub and delivers factual information for issues regarding the seal epidemic

**1988**

6th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium on monitoring in Sylt



**1989**

Start of the Trilateral Monitoring Project on Breeding Birds and the Joint Seal Project

**1991**

First Quality Status Report published



**1993**

Start of the Trilateral Monitoring Project on Migratory Birds



**1993**

Concept of an integrated monitoring programme by the Trilateral Monitoring Expert Group



**1994**

First issue of the Wadden Sea Ecosystem series published

**1997**

TMAP Common Package with harmonised set of parameters adopted in Stade Declaration



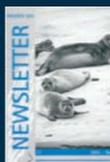
**1999**

Third Quality Status Report published – first based on TMAP



**2002**

Trilateral Seal Expert Group and CWSS provide factual information on outbreak of second seal epidemic



**2008**

TMAP revised in the framework of the HARBASINS project

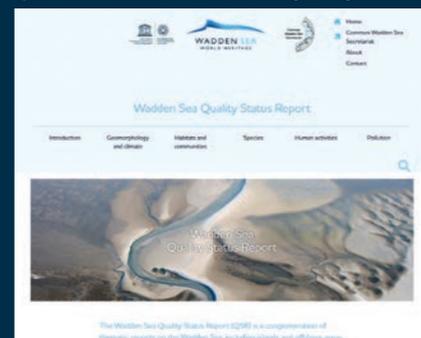
**2010**

The first QSR Synthesis Report is published, summarising the main results and recommendations for science, policy and management



**2017**

The QSR is now published online at [qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org](http://qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org)



## A world class treasure

Since 2009, the Wadden Sea World Heritage site has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It was inscribed for its globally unique geological and ecological values as well as for its biodiversity. The cooperation of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands and designation of the entire Wadden Sea were a prerequisite for UNESCO and determined the road to achieving the World Heritage title.

Images: (opposite page)  
Satellite image: albedo39  
Satellitenbildwerkstatt e.K.  
(image processing),  
Brockmann Consult GmbH  
(scientific consulting), raw  
data: U.S. Geological Survey;  
(below) Pieter de Vries



## Milestones of World Heritage

**1989**

World Heritage Committee defers Lower Saxon nomination and requests a joint nomination by the three countries

**1991**

Feasibility study (Burbridge Report) on designating the Wadden Sea as World Heritage Site – Trilateral Governmental Conference, Esbjerg, agrees to pursue the issue



**1994**

Collation of bird counts since the 1960s (Meltotte Report) substantiates the global importance of the Wadden Sea for migratory birds

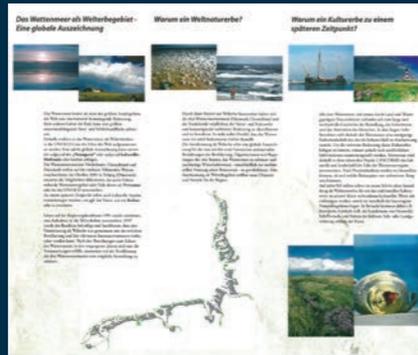


**2000**

Update of the World Heritage feasibility study (Burbridge Report II) validates that the Wadden Sea can be inscribed on the World Heritage List

**2001**

Trilateral Governmental Conference, Esbjerg, commences formal consultation on the World Heritage site nomination



**2005**

Trilateral Governmental Conference, Schiermonnikoog, starts the nomination process for the Wadden Sea World Heritage in Germany and the Netherlands

**2008**

Nomination dossier for the inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List is submitted to the World Heritage Centre



**2009**

World Heritage Committee inscribes the Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List



**2011**

The World Heritage Site is extended to include the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park



**2014**

Extension of the World Heritage site to include Danish part of the Wadden Sea and further offshore parts of the Lower Saxon National Park, completing the Wadden Sea World Heritage



**2014**

Adoption of trilateral strategy on "Sustainable Tourism in the Destination Wadden Sea World Heritage"



**2014**

Flyway Vision developed by the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative signed



**2015**

Adoption of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy

**2015**

First Wadden Sea World Heritage stand at the ITB travel fair



**2019**

10th anniversary of the Wadden Sea World Heritage



## Seeing the big picture

With the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List, UNESCO aims to promote international collaboration between sites and countries. This philosophy has a long heritage in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. It is also a necessity, because the protection of the Wadden Sea can only be ensured by addressing and adapting to global threats.

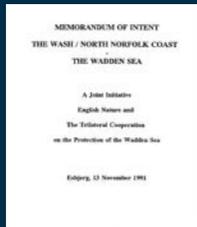
Images: (left) Anne Littaye;  
(below) CWSS



## Milestones of International Cooperation

**1991**

Memorandum of Intent with The Wash/Northern Norfolk Coast (UK) on conservation and management



**1997**

Memorandum of Intent signed with Guinea-Bissau on bird counting and capacity building



**2009**

Memorandum of Understanding with Korea on tidal flat conservation and management



**2012**

Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative on cooperation along the East Atlantic Flyway started



**2014**

Memorandum of Understanding signed with Banc d'Arguin (Mauritania) on protection of migratory birds



**2017**

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre becomes exhibition partner of the Wadden Sea World Heritage at the ITB travel fair



**2017**

Children from the Wadden Sea take part in the Ocean Pledge of the UNESCO Marine World Heritage Programme at the UN Oceans Conference, New York (right)



Image (right): UNESCO – Joel Sheakoski

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