

48th meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 48)

Meeting Document No. WSB 48/4

4 March 2026
Online

Agenda Item	4 Announcements
Document Title	WSB 48/4 Announcements by CWSS
Submitted by	CWSS
Submitted on	11 February 2026
Proposal	The WSB is invited to note the document

The following paper gives a written overview of the announcements of CWSS to the WSB 48.

Announcements by CWSS to WSB48

Preliminary Rental Agreements Signed for New Building

For construction of the Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre at Banter Lake to commence, the Wilhelmshaven City Council had set various conditions to secure its financing. One of these conditions was that the future tenants had to confirm the planned tenancy agreement in advance by signing preliminary rental agreements. This was now done in the presence of Lower Saxony's Environment Minister Christian Meyer on the 40th anniversary celebration of the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park. According to the City of Wilhelmshaven, preliminary work has been completed to such an extent that the first major tender for the construction work can now be published for construction to begin this summer.

15 Years of the Network Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage (NG-ST)

In 2026, the Network Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage marks its 15th anniversary. Since the very first TG Sustainable Tourism Strategy meeting in February 2011, partners from across the trilateral Wadden Sea regions have been working together to advance sustainable tourism and strengthen cooperation within the World Heritage Destination.

Over the past 15 years, the network has developed into a strong, trusted platform for joint projects, shared learning, and coordinated action — all contributing to the long-term protection and sustainable development of the Wadden Sea.

CWSS works on meeting accessibility standards

To realise the [EU Directive 2016/2102](#) on accessibility, CWSS has updated its websites' functions and group document templates, published an [accessibility statement](#), and created CWSS-internal guidelines to integrate accessibility standards more efficiently in future content creation. For 2026, a similar update for the IWSS microsite and the annual report template are envisioned.

eDNA Expeditions 2026-2028

The second phase of the eDNA Expeditions will run from 2026 to 2028. The Wadden Sea was one of 25 marine World Heritage sites that participated in the first phase (2022–2025). Participation in the new phase requires sites to submit an application. All Wadden Sea countries and the German federal states have confirmed their interest and readiness to join this next phase. Each Party has appointed a focal point for the initiative, and CWSS is coordinating the preparation and submission

of a joint Expression of Interest. If selected, sampling campaigns are expected to begin in Q2–Q3 2026.

The eDNA Expeditions 2026–2028 are organised under the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and coordinated by the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) in collaboration with the UNESCO Marine Programme. For more information see: <https://ednaexpeditions.org/>

People and Nature in UNESCO Sites

In the framework of the collaboration with the UNESCO Marine Programme, the TWSC contributed €2000 to the UNESCO publication People and Nature in UNESCO sites. The publication will present the findings of the first-ever global assessment of the conservation status of UNESCO-designated sites, including World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, and Global Geoparks. This illustrated factsheet report will provide key global statistics, facts and figures, highlighting current trends and projections across UNESCO-designated sites. The assessment will focus primarily on an analysis of biological diversity, ecosystem functions, key anthropogenic pressures, and projections of climate change impacts on these sites. Cultural dimensions, including links to elements of intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge, will also be examined. Additionally, the report will emphasize the contributions of these sites to global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Paris Agreement, among others. By doing so, it will provide robust evidence for integrating the monitoring of these sites into national and global policies and strengthen the case for increased investment in conservation and sustainable development.

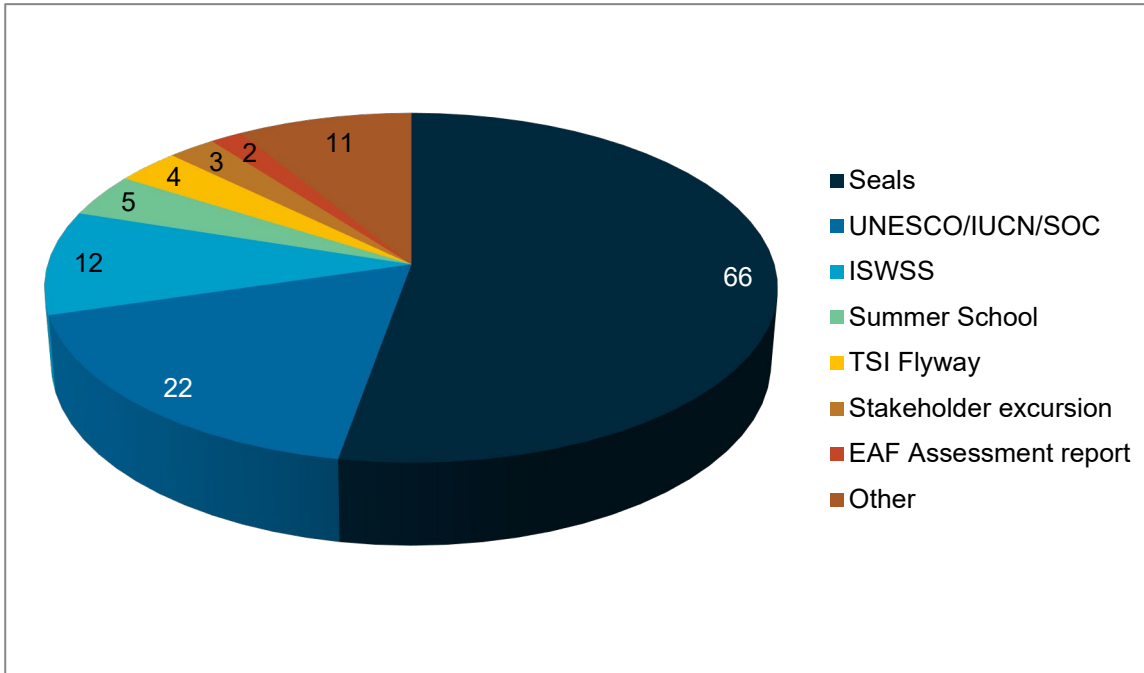
2025 Media Review

1 January – 31 December 2025

PRESS REVIEW

- 9 press releases (2024: 6) by CWSS on TSI Flyway project, stakeholder excursion, EAF assessment report, seals reports, WSD, Summer School, predation workshop, ISWSS
- 125 mentions in printed, broadcasting, and online media (205 in 2024)
- 38 NL, 0 DK, 83 DE, 4 other (2024: 68 NL, 1 DK, 126 DE, 11 other)

Distribution of entries by topic:



WEBSITE REVIEW

Since mid-September, the Wadden Sea World Heritage website has been experiencing what is termed a “China Traffic Spike”: a massive influx of inauthentic bot traffic originating from China and Singapore. This is a global phenomenon of coordinated AI scrapers harvesting data to train Large Language Models (not a hack). It won’t affect the site’s SEO directly, but it distorts the website’s statistics. A small spike was also seen originating from the US suggesting a similar cause, but no further information could be found. Therefore, for the statistics below, numbers from China and Singapore were excluded (incl. potential genuine visits), numbers from the US were kept.

- 155,000 website visitors (2024: 147,000); 28% DE, 16.5% NL, 4.1% DK
- Most popular pages (in that order): CWSS, CCAIP table, QSR, Resources, Job vacancies, QSR salt marshes, ISWSS, QSR climate change, Netherlands, Your visit
- Microsites: QSR 23,820 users (2024: 22,580); Flyway 3,771 users (2024: 2,000); Swimway: 521 users (2024: 600)
- Numbers unaffected by the spike:
- 41 news items posted in 2025 (2024: 49)
- Newsletter: increase of subscribers from 347 to 365 over the year; excellent open-rate with an average of 57% and click-rate with an average of 21%.

SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEW

Engagement rates on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Instagram and Facebook accounts are low this year, mirroring the general trend of reduced reach and engagement at both platforms. Meta has moved away from engagement metrics incl. the engagement rate and introduced the new

indicator “Views”, which states the number of times content was played or displayed to users. Nevertheless, the audience of the Wadden Sea World Heritage account is growing on Instagram and stable on Facebook.

LinkedIn shows a different picture and continues to deliver the strongest engagement among major platforms. Here, follower increase of the CWSS page remains significant and the engagement rate of 14.5% is well above the 2025 average of 3.5%.

The trilateral group of social media managers continues to meet once a month to exchange latest activities in the regions, compare experiences on the platforms and discuss possible collaborations. A workshop with professional input is planned for 24-25 March 2026.

Instagram:

- Increase of 247 followers to 3,189; 42% DE, 30.7% NL, 5.1% DK
- 87 posts and 101 stories viewed by 79,216 with a total of 2,889 content interactions and 20,416 reach

LinkedIn

- Increase of 665 followers to 1,940 followers
- 111 posts with a total of 2,435 reactions and 88,346 impressions
- Engagement rate: 14.5%

Facebook:

- Stable number of followers at 3,442; 44.2% DE, 28.5% NL, 5% DK
- 100 posts viewed by 47,278 with total of 1,028 content interaction
- Standard text in Georgia 11, 1.5 spacing and 10pt after each paragraph