

Wadden Sea Board

WSB 13
28-29 January 2015
Wilhelmshaven



Agenda Item:	4. Announcements
Subject:	Report World Parks Congress 2014
Document No.	WSB 13/4.1
Date:	21 January 2015
Submitted by:	Secretariat

Attached is a report from the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, November 2014, at which the Secretariat participated in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Korean KOEM.

Proposal: **The meeting is invited to note the report.**

Report from the World Parks Congress 2014

Summary

In cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme, Harald Marencic represented the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation at the World Parks Congress 2014.

The Wadden Sea was presented at three occasions:

1. At a 20 min talk at the IUCN Business and Biodiversity Pavilion with focus on sustainable tourism as a tool to maintain the OUV, and international cooperation (Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, MoU Banc d'Arguin, MoU Korea).
2. A cooperative workshop on "Strategic Environmental Assessment" together with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and HELCOM.
3. An e-poster presentation in cooperation with the Korea KOEM on the results on the MoU Korea-Wadden Sea.

The Congress confirmed the approach in the Wadden Sea of using the World Heritage Status as a tool to enable strategic partners, local communities and the young generation to contributing to the protection of the OUV.

At many events and during many talks, the Wadden Sea was acknowledged as a world-class example for successful transboundary cooperation on policy, management, monitoring, research and communication, and working with partners internationally.

1. Introduction World Parks Congress

The 6th IUCN World Congress on Protected Areas, or World Parks Congress (WPC), convened in Sydney, Australia, from 12-19 November 2014. Over 6,000 participants from over 170 countries attended the meeting, representing governments and public agencies, international organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community and indigenous organizations.

IUCN organizes the Congress once each decade to take stock of the state of protected areas (PAs) worldwide, appraise progress and setbacks, and define the agenda for PAs for the next decade. The theme of the WPC 2014 was "Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions." The 5th IUCN WPC was held in Durban, South Africa (September 2003) and focused on the "Benefits beyond boundaries" of conservation.

During the eight days of plenary and workshop sessions, side events and field trips, participants addressed ways to: reach conservation goals; respond to climate change; improve health and well-being; support human life; reconcile different development challenges; enhance diversity and quality of governance; respect indigenous and traditional knowledge culture; and inspire a new generation to prioritize conservation. The principal outcome document of the WPC, the [Promise of Sydney](#), captured the main outcomes of the Congress as well as an ongoing online dialogue regarding potential solutions.

The objective of the “Promise of Sydney” is to demonstrate that Protected Areas are one of the best investments people can make for the future of their planet and themselves, and also to accelerate implementation of innovative approaches to ensure that these investments are successful.

2. The Wadden Sea at the WPC

2.1. UNESCO WH Marine Programme

The [UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme](#) coordinated the presentation of marine WH sites at the WPC at which almost 20 marine site managers participated and gave presentations at the WPC. With a special evening event at the Ocean Pavilion and other activities, the visibility of the marine World Heritage was increased and the cooperation between the marine sites further strengthened.



The Wadden Sea was presented at the Business and Biodiversity Pavilion organized by the IUCN Global Business & Biodiversity Programme. In a 20-minute talk, the work of the Trilateral Cooperation on protection of the World Heritage was introduced together with the sustainable tourism strategy, and international cooperation for mutual support in the protection of tidal flats, including the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, the MoU with Banc d'Arguin, the MoU with Korea and the cooperation with the UNESCO Marine Programme. During the discussion, the potential of World Heritage for sustainable social-economic regional development (as outlined by Rebanks 2010) was seen as an important element to contribute to the OUV. The tourism strategy was also considered as a good example, which may serve as a blueprint for other sectors.

2.2. Workshop on strategic environmental assessment

Together with GBRMPA as lead partner, HELCOM and the Wadden Sea organized an interactive workshop on “Strategic Environmental Assessments: Concepts, methods and lessons learned and application for Marine Protected Areas” with the participation of about 60 persons. In this context, the Wadden Sea approach (Wadden Sea Plan, Targets, TMAP, QSR) was presented as an example of strategic environmental assessment. Four sub-groups discussed how monitoring, valuation and accounting methods to measure the social and economic benefits of parks and protected areas are applied.

2.3 MoU Korea – Wadden Sea

The presentation of the MoU and the experiences gathered with this cooperation was prepared together with the Korean KOEM and accepted by the WPC as an electronic poster. The poster presentation was an opportunity to further communicate the successful work of this MoU internationally.

3. World Heritage Events

3.1 IUCN World Heritage Outlook



The IUCN launched the web-based World Heritage Outlook which provides an independent assessment of the state of conservation of all 228 natural heritage sites and its potential to be maintained in the future. It shows that World Heritage sites have a role in demonstrating excellence and becoming leaders in nature conservation.

These assessments are a projection of the potential for a natural World Heritage site to conserve its values over time, based on a desk-based assessment of the current state, threats and effectiveness of protection.

<http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/home>

3.2 Benefits of natural World Heritage Sites



The IUCN also launched a report on “The Benefits of natural World Heritage Sites” supported by the German Federal Nature Conservation Agency (BfN).

The report features 23 case studies on ecosystem services and benefits, the economic valuation of ecosystem services, and governance and management. Cases range from forests that store carbon and water to areas that create jobs and provide income from recreation and tourism.

The report mentions the Wadden Sea and the PROWAD project as a best practice for management of a transboundary nature site.

<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/44901>

5. Field excursion Great Barrier Reef

A 3-day excursion to the Great Barrier Reef (Gladstone, Heron Island) was organized by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Besides a field excursion to the reef (walking the reef at low tide, snorkelling and a semi-submersible trip), a seminar programme conducted by GBRMPA managers introduced the management framework of the Great Barrier Reef, the recent Strategic Assessment and Outlook Report, and partnership programmes.

A visit of the Heron Island Research Station and discussion scientists provided an insight into the most recent scientific research conducted in collaboration with managers on impacts of climate change, coral bleaching, and effects of zoning in marine areas.

The WPC and the field excursion was a good opportunity to strengthen the exchange between the GBRMPA and the Wadden Sea in the framework of the Marine Programme as there are many management issues where an exchange is of mutual interest. This includes also the application of the OUV concept for reporting the state of conservation to the UNESCO (Outlook Report).

5. Conclusion

The WPC was an impressive market place to exchange experience and new trends in policy and management of protected areas globally and provided a unique opportunity to obtain access to an enormous expertise of a large community and on all aspects of nature conservation.

The Congress also confirmed the approach in the Wadden Sea to use World Heritage as a tool to engage strategic partners, local communities and the young generation in contributing to protection of the OUV. At many events and during many talks, the Wadden Sea was acknowledged as a world-class example of successful transboundary cooperation on policy, management, monitoring, research and communication.

Specifically, the WPC underlined the need for an adequate communication to show that protected areas and World Heritage are one of the best investments people can make for the benefit of present and future generations:

- Branding of World Heritage as a tool to interest and involve people (locals, young generation) through environmental education and telling the story of WH,
- Realizing the potential of World Heritage to broadly engage society for nature conservation and sustainable development, which contributes to the OUV,
- Further enhancing cooperation across borders and with new partners,
- Extending the international network to support each other in nature conservation and communication nationally and internationally.