

Wadden Sea Board

WSB 6
5 October 2012
CWSS



Agenda Item:	5
Subject:	Nature Restoration
Document No.	WSB 6/5-6
Date:	24 September 2012
Submitted by:	TG-M

The WSB-5 meeting requested TG-M to discuss nature restoration as a possible issue for the 2014 Wadden Sea Conference. Attached is an overview of main types of nature restoration activities, together with an assessment in the light of Habitats Directive requirements and the Guiding Principle.

TG-M will continue discussing the possible relevance of nature restoration in a trilateral context at its next meeting (19-20 December 2012) with a view to preparing a discussion document for WSB-7.

Proposal	The meeting is invited to note the information and to provide, if appropriate, additional guidance to TG-M
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NATURE RESTORATION ACTIVITIES IN THE TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA

1. National activities

Schleswig-Holstein

1. Rockarming of an area of about 8 ha of the artificial island Mittelplate A (oil production) has made compensatory measures necessary.
The oil company has proposed to increase the naturalness of 54 ha of salt marsh area, the current status of which is strongly determined by coastal protection measures (for example artificially drained). This compensation measure has recently been stopped pending a court case ruling related to changes in N2000 habitat types.
2. Removal of an artificial hill on the Hamburger Hallig in order to avoid settling of mammalian predators (foxes).

Lower Saxony

3. Opening of summer polder dikes as a compensation for port construction in Bremerhaven and Wilhelmshaven.

Netherlands

4. Opening of summer polder dikes
5. Creation of fish migration possibilities
6. Restoring mussel beds
7. Restoring seagrass meadows
8. Creation of artificial islands for birds (high water roosts)
9. More natural dike reinforcement (sand suppletion on seaward side of dike)

Denmark

10. Houting projects (fish migration)

2. Assessment

The above restoration activities can be categorised as follows:

A. Removal or reducing impact of anthropogenic structures
Projects 1, 2, 4, 5, 10

B. Stimulating development of natural habitats
Projects 6, 7

C. Creation of artificial habitats Projects 8, 9

For each of these categories conflicts may arise with the implementation of the Habitats Directive, i.e. increasing the area of a certain habitat type by reducing the area of another Habitat type.

In addition, activities from categories B and C are principally in conflict with the Guiding Principle *“to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”*.

3. Trilateral approach

There are substantial differences in national nature restoration policies/practices. A more harmonised trilateral approach seems desirable. Such an approach should address:

1. Legal possibilities for changing one habitat type into another. In the Netherlands a discussion has started. In Schleswig-Holstein the court will deal with this question. This issue is also being discussed at EU level.
2. Possibilities for making compensation measures more ecosystem appropriate, for example by pooling small compensation measures into larger projects or by transboundary compensation (i.e. if there is no possibility to compensate a certain habitat type in one country, there may be options in another part of the Wadden Sea).
3. Development of “rules of procedure” for interpreting the Guiding Principle in the context of nature restoration.