



- Breeding
- Staging and wintering
- East Atlantic Flyway

## An avian service station

Its central position along the East Atlantic Flyway makes the Wadden Sea a vital refuge for over 10 million migratory birds each year. Many birds such as red knot, brent geese and dunlin rely on our coastal tidal flats and salt marshes for food and rest. Here they will find enough fuel to complete the long journey from their winter homes in Africa and Europe to their summer breeding grounds in the Arctic.



## Safe travels

*The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative was launched in 2012 to support the conservation of migratory birds as they travel along the East Atlantic Flyway, through monitoring and capacity building in habitat preservation and site management.*

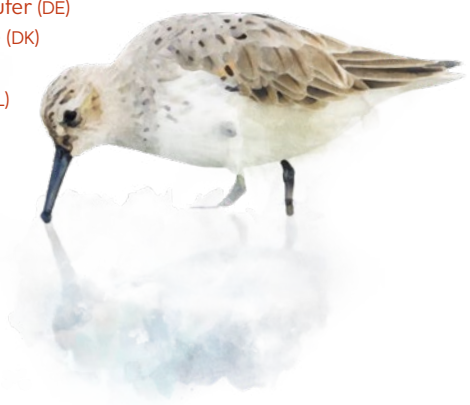
## Some of the stars of the Wadden Sea

**Harbour Seal**  
Seehund (DE)  
spættede sæl (DK)  
gewone zeehond (NL)



One of our largest predators and at the top of the food web, the harbour seal almost vanished from the area during medieval times. Thanks to dedicated conservation efforts carried out from the 1970s, you'll have a great chance of spotting some of the 40,000 seals sunbathing on a sandbank today!

**Dunlin**  
Alpenstrandläufer (DE)  
almindelig ryle (DK)  
bonte strandloper (NL)



Spectacular flocks of wading birds, such as dunlin, can be seen everywhere. Every square metre of tidal flat provides a square meal for our waders, thanks to millions of tiny creatures found below the slick brown surface.

**Lugworm**  
Wattwurm (DE)  
sandorm (DK)  
zeepier (NL)



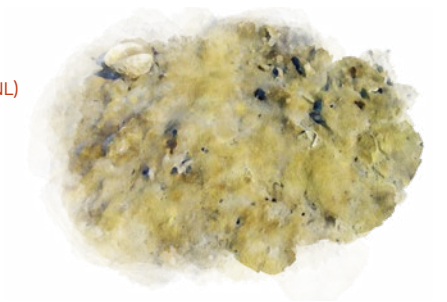
Keep an eye out for the tell-tale spaghetti hills, left in the sand and mud by lugworms. The gardeners of the tidal flats, lugworms recycle the surface, enriching it with oxygen and breathing life into the Wadden Sea food web.

**Sea Lavender**  
Strandflieder (DE)  
hindebæger (DK)  
lamsoor (NL)



Cast your eyes to the saltmarsh in the summer to see the violet blossoms of sea lavender. Each time their seaside home is flooded by the tide, sediment is caught amongst the plants, increasing the height of the land and helping this wildlife rich habitat adapt to rising sea levels.

**Algae**  
Algen (DE)  
alger (DK)  
zeewier (NL)



The tidal flats may look desolate, but they are full of life. The sediment surface is almost completely covered with thousands of species of microscopic algae. These can be seen as a green or brown sheen on the surface of the tidal flat.



*A place where heaven and earth share the same stage.*

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This is a publication of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) in cooperation with the organisations listed below.  
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## Our Wadden Sea World Heritage

## One Wadden Sea. One Global Heritage.

The Wadden Sea is a place like no other on earth. A unique natural seascape bursting with life, it offers a vital home to global wildlife and unforgettable experiences to all those who visit.

In 2009, the Wadden Sea took its place on the World Heritage List, joining global natural wonders including the Galápagos Islands and the Grand Canyon.

### Nature has no borders

Nowhere else on earth will you find a diverse and dynamic coastline of this scale. The Wadden Sea forms a cohesive ecosystem that spans 500 km along the shores of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, and supports over 10,000 different species of animals and plants. Some call it home and, for others, it's a life-saving stopover on their global travels.

## World Heritage since 2009

Being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list is the highest global recognition for a natural site. It celebrates the area's outstanding universal value, both now and in the future, and the efforts being made to preserve and manage it for all humankind.

### Outstanding Universal Value:

*The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world.*

### World Heritage selection criteria:

- Geological processes
- Ecological & biological processes
- Biodiversity

Area: 11,434 km<sup>2</sup>



*Biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea.*

## A unique landscape shaped by wind and water

Over the past 8,000 years, this dynamic coastline has been shaped by the elements and strongly influenced by rising sea level. The continuous interplay between wind, currents and tides creates an ever-changing tapestry of islands, sandbanks, channels, sand and mud flats, saltmarshes, beaches and dunes.

As these natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed, the site's extraordinary geological variety makes it a home to thousands of incredible plant and animal species that have cleverly learned to adapt to their shifting environment.

## A guardian of biodiversity

The Wadden Sea is an irreplaceable hotspot for global biodiversity, from single-celled organisms to plants, fishes, birds and marine mammals. Here exists an intricate food web, making the site a bountiful home to vast numbers of wild residents, and crucial to the conservation of millions of migratory birds visiting on their world travels.

## A joint effort

The integrity of this vast natural treasure trove is jointly protected by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. From local residents, visitors and businesses to national parks, governments, green NGOs and cross-border collaborations, we're all playing a part.

### Cooperation across borders

In 1978, encouraged by the research community and green NGOs, governments across the Wadden Sea region formed the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. The Cooperation fosters collaboration and exchange between partners from politics, nature conservation and science, as well as local stakeholders, to ensure a coordinated approach to managing and safeguarding this huge shared ecosystem.

*World Heritage sites belong to all people on earth, protected for future generations.*

## Explore a natural wonder

A visit to the Wadden Sea will bring you stunning scenery, restorative tranquility and spectacular wildlife encounters.

Your senses will come alive as you gaze towards the far horizon, listen to the crackling in the mud flats generated by thousands of little crabs, taste the salty air, feel the mud squeeze through your toes and breathe in the smell of the mud flat soil.

Knowledgeable and friendly guides are ready to ignite your passion for this special place on guided walks and wildlife adventures, including seal trips and bird tours.

**We look forward to welcoming you!**

### Near You

No matter which part of the Wadden Sea you visit, each has its own charm and character and is full of highlights.

For more information and to find a visitor centre near you, visit: [www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/visit/](http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/visit/)

