

Welcome to the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park

You'll get to know a landscape which is unique in the entire world and therefore worth protecting. This is also the reason why the entire Wadden Sea was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Here are some useful hints to enable you to experience and enjoy its outstanding environment. At the same time we will explain how you can contribute to its conservation.

This leaflet will tell you about:

- The different conservation zones of the National Park
- The importance of the Wadden Sea
- Offers for information and experience

We wish you an unforgettable stay!

Further information is available at the visitor information centres, the National Park Authority, the many tourist information agencies as well as online at: www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/nds

Glasswort is a common salt marsh plant



Welcome to our National Park



Nationalpark
Wattenmeer
NIEDERSACHSEN



The Wadden Sea is of great importance as:

- A habitat for harbour seals and grey seals
- A central stopover site along the East-Atlantic flyway for migrating birds. Only here in the Wadden Sea can the migrant birds find sufficient nourishment to build up their reserves for the annual flights of thousands of kilometres between their breeding grounds in the north and their winter homes in the south
- Breeding and moulting grounds for waders and waterfowl
- Wintering grounds for arctic breeding birds
- The “larder” of the North Sea: micro-organisms use the nutrients and serve as food for larger animals
- A habitat for plants which have adapted to the effects of salt, wind, flooding or being covered by sand (eg. seaweed, glasswort, sea aster and beach grass)
- A cultural area and home to the people living and working here
- A recreation area for millions of holidaymakers.

Habitats in the Wadden Sea

Mudflats are those parts of the Wadden Sea which are regularly flooded and left to dry again with the changing tides, while the sea channels stay filled with water. On and under the surface of the mudflats live innumerable microorganisms. They draw nourishment from the water and the soil, and also consume the pollutants that are washed in with the tide. They, in turn, form a rich source of food for fish and birds.

Salt marshes develop when so much sediment is deposited in front of the dike that areas rise up out of the tides and are only flooded at irregular intervals. Under such special influences with changing salt content, flooding and a supply of food these locations develop a highly specialised community. For example, around 400 species of insects are found on only 25 plant species in the salt marshes!

Dunes and beaches form mainly on the east and north sides of the islands. Dunes develop from sand which is blown in and are held together by deep-rooting plants. They are vital to the survival of the islands and the people who live there, providing protection as natural breakwaters from floods. Anyone who destroys dunes and their plant life is putting human life at risk!

Beaches are highly dynamic habitats shaped by waves and currents. They can be found wherever enough sand is washed up from the North Sea. This habitat is populated by organisms that have adapted to the permanent redistribution of the sand. Many of their nutrients come from the drift line.

What is a National Park?

In a National Park the aim is to leave nature to itself to the greatest possible extent and be preferably unaffected by humans.

The Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park was founded in 1986 and is protected by law.

- In the Wadden Sea National Park, the special character of the landscape along the shoreline is conserved and protected from any adverse effects.
- The natural processes within this ecosystem are allowed to continue.
- The biological variety of the plant and animal species is to be conserved.

Everyone is welcome to experience the special environment of the park. The marked paths open up the full variety of nature to you.

Information boards will help you find your way around and learn about your surroundings so you can enjoy nature without disturbing it.

Special habitats

In the Wadden Sea you'll find

- The sandy cliffs at the Jade Bay (next to Dangast) and near Cuxhaven-Sahlenburg
- The brackish water reed in bays (Dollart) and at the western mouth of the Weser, where saltwater and freshwater mix
- The swimming bog in the Jade Bay (Sehestedt)
- Sea grass meadows
- Blue mussel beds
- The sea areas northern of the islands

Information and Education

Visitor Centres

National Park Visitor Centres offer exhibitions, lectures, field trips and experimental programmes. You can also ask for special offers for children and other groups.

For further information and contact details, see www.nationalparkhaus-wattenmeer.de online.

On the coast

- Benseniel
- Carolinensiel
- Cuxhaven
- Dangast
- Dornumersiel
- Dorum-Neufeld
- Fedderwardersiel
- Greetsiel
- Minsin (Wangerland)
- Norddeich
- Sehestedt
- Wilhelmshaven

On the islands

- Baltrum
- Borkum
- Juist
- Norderney
- Spiekeroog
- Wangerooge

National Park Guides and Tours

are specially skilled and certified for guided tours in the National Park. For further information about routes and dates see www.nationalpark-partner-wattenmeer-nds.de/ natur-erlebnis or have a look on the local noticeboards. You recognise our certified providers of boat trips to the Wadden Sea by the National Park Logo and partner flag.

Unique and irreplaceable throughout the world

The Wadden Sea ecosystem, on the Danish-German-Dutch North Sea coast, is unmatched anywhere else in the world. The following factors combine here to form a unique and very special place:

- The seabed only slopes gradually towards the open North Sea waters. The inlets between the islands and the northern open coastal waters of the National Park are deeper than 20 metres.
- Sediments are carried here from rivers which flow into the Wadden Sea and form deposits in quiet waters.
- At a tidal range beyond 1.7 metres, the tidal current is strong enough to deposit material from the sea.
- The dunes and sandbanks which were formed from deposited sand act as natural breakwater.
- The temperate climate causes the open character of the tidal landscape (under the same conditions that mangrove woods can be found in the tropics).



Profile of the National Park

Founded: 1986

Boundaries: Tidal mudflats, tidal creeks, salt marshes, dunes and beaches offshore from Lower Saxony between the Dollart and the estuary of the river Elbe, including the preliminary islands, sandbanks and open sea areas

Area: 3,450 square kilometers

- Restricted zone: 68,5 %
- Intermediate zone: 31,0 %
- Recreation zone: 0,5 %

International honour and protection:

- UNESCO World Natural Heritage since 2009
- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1992
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) after EU Habitats and Birds Directives
- Wetland of international importance (Ramsar Convention) since 1976
- Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) since 2002
- National Geotope since 2006

Local support and supervision:

- National Park Rangers
- Volunteering rangers
- Police and Coast Guard
- Nature conservation organisations

Publisher:
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Picture credits: N. Hecker/NLPV; J. Lacina/NLPV; V. Lautenbach/Mellumrat; R. Lottmann; B. Schmidt/NLPV; E. Schonart; National Park Authority
Drawings: Steffen Walentowitz
Stand: 02/2023
Printed on 100 % recycled paper

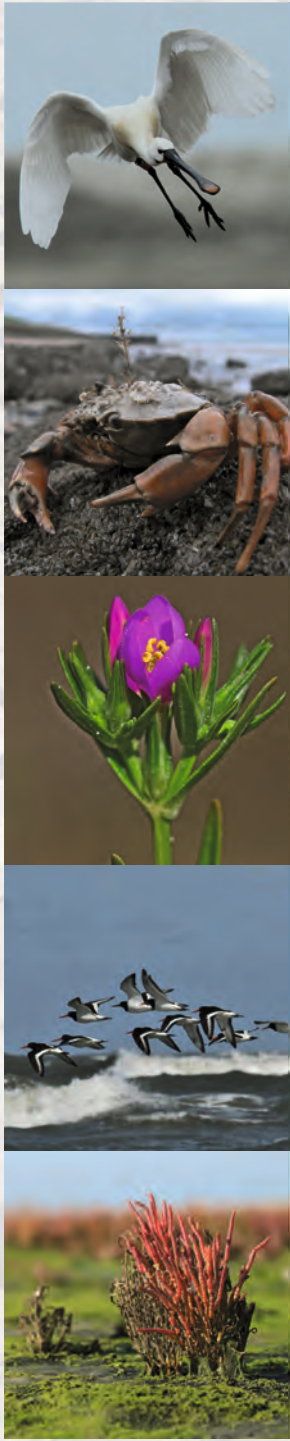
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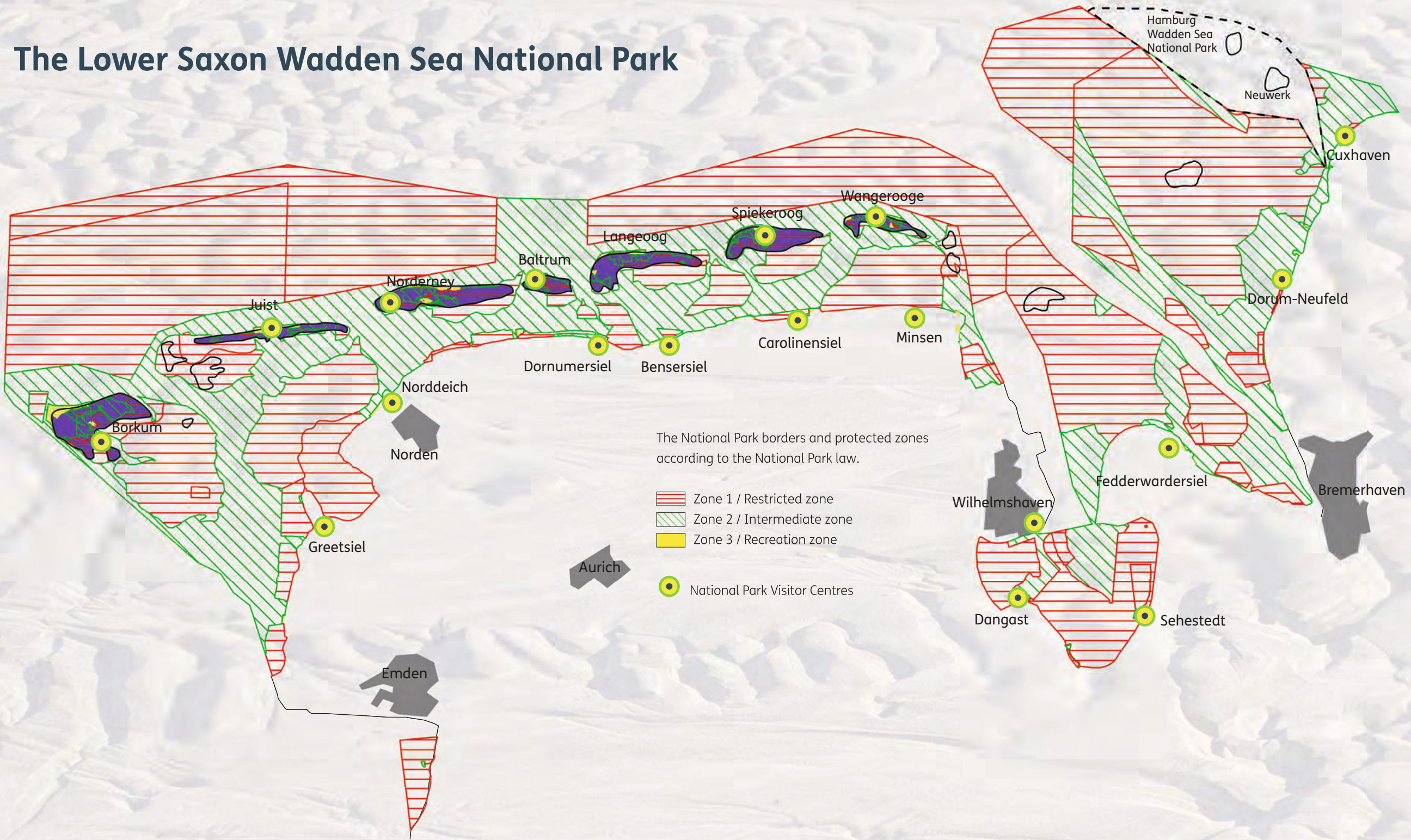
The Lower Saxon Wadden Sea national park and biosphere reserve are part of Nationale Naturlandschaften (NNL), the Alliance of German national parks, nature parks, biosphere reserves and wilderness areas.
www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de

Little Terns breed right on the beaches





The Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park



The protected zones of the National Park

The Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park is divided into three different zones.

Restricted zone
The restricted zone covers the most vulnerable areas of the national park. The strictest conservation rules apply here.

Intermediate zone
Basically the same conservation rules as in the restricted zone apply here, but walkers may leave marked paths. It is not permitted to leave marked paths on salt marshes during the breeding season between April 1 - July 31 though.

Recreation zone
This zone consists mostly of beach areas for recreation in a natural environment.

Finding your way around

In the regional leaflets and on information boards you will find orientation maps about the area you are in. Zoning signs – white lettering on a blue background – give information about the character of the protected zone you are in and about special rules. The permitted paths are marked by colour-coded posts:

Green for walks
Red for horseback riding

Pathes over the dunes are marked by dunecrosses.



In the restricted zone and in the intermediate zone, any actions which would destroy, damage or change the national park or individual elements of it are prohibited:

- It is not permitted to disturb the peace of the natural surroundings
- It is not permitted to disturb animal life. Animals may not be tracked down, filmed or photographed in their breeding or nursing areas
- Dogs must be kept on leads
- It is not permitted to fly kites, drones or model aircraft
- Kite surfing and kite buggying is neither allowed in the restricted nor in the intermediate zones. Please ask on-site at the tourist offices in which areas these activities are permitted.

To protect the environment, the use of the restricted zone and the intermediate zone is restricted not only for recreation but also for agriculture, fishing, hunting, boats etc.

Moving around the restricted zone

In the restricted zone please keep to the marked routes for hiking, biking, riding etc from where you will be able to enjoy nature without disturbing it. Take note of the separate local arrangements indicated.

Moving around the intermediate zone

In the intermediate zone you may leave the marked paths for walking. The salt marshes are an exception. During the birds' breeding and rearing season - the period from April 1st to July 31st - they may only be entered by the marked paths. Please keep in mind that you may only use marked paths for walking, cycling and riding. Fishing is allowed everywhere in the intermediate zone. For certain parts of the intermediate zone separate arrangements apply which are indicated by signs (e.g. no access to dunes because of coast protection).

Moving around the recreation zone

Recreation zone offer space for leisure and health purposes. In this area of the national park all activities are allowed which are essential for a holiday on the North Sea coast, such as swimming, resting, relaxing in beach chairs, riding, fishing, collecting shells and taking exercises on the beach. Camping, caravans, noisy events, and off-road vehicles are not allowed. You can also ask for the arrangements of the local health resort. Many of them offer special beaches or other areas for dog-owners and kite-fliers.

To protect wild animals, please make sure that your sports and leisure activities do not disturb the adjoining restricted and intermediate zones. This applies, for example, to surfing and kite-flying.

Lighthouse Arngast in the Jade Bay



The Harour Seal is probably the best-known mammal that lives in the Wadden Sea

