



# Perspective of a green NGO on saltmarsh conservation and management

Oct 10, 2024

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# Guiding Principle for the Wadden Sea since 1991

*„...is to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which **natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way.**“*

- General guideline also for the Wadden Sea saltmarshes





# Wadden Sea saltmarshes: the negative side

- Many saltmarshes are artificial drained and cannot develop naturally
- Edges are often heavily modified by stone revetments
- Too many saltmarshes are still heavily grazed
- Breeding birds in saltmarshes are under pressure: storm tides in the breeding season & heavy predation (more than natural)
- All saltmarshes are in the long term under risk by the accelerated sea level rise







# Wadden Sea saltmarshes: the bright side

- Almost all Wadden Sea saltmarshes are put under nature conservation, no embankments anymore
- Saltmarshes in the Wadden Sea are very large, ca. 40,000 ha
- A large proportion of this is allowed to develop ±naturally

All of this is a big success of Wadden Sea protection!





# What did we learn in 40 years of saltmarsh conservation?

- The reduction in **grazing** has benefited nature – but e.g. artificially **drained** salt marsh need active restoration
- **Saltmarshes contribute to the safety of dikes**, and do not need grazing for this function
- „**Nature Conservation**“ and „**Coastal Defence**“ must intensify mutual cooperation!
- Create joint projects and win-win-solutions!
- Hallig-saltmarshes need more floodings („Landunter“) that leave sediment to „grow with the sea“



# How much salt marsh management do we want?

**Priority for „hands off management“:** natural dynamics first!

**Active nature management** of certain species or habitats, including restoration, is possible as an exception

**Examples:** open summer dikes, reduce artificial drainage / ditches, selective grazing for biodiversity (if human influences do not allow restoration)

**Requirements for active management** [*no complete list*]:

- clear criteria, and
- only a small area is affected (in comparison with the Wadden Sea)



**Thank you  
for your attention!**

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