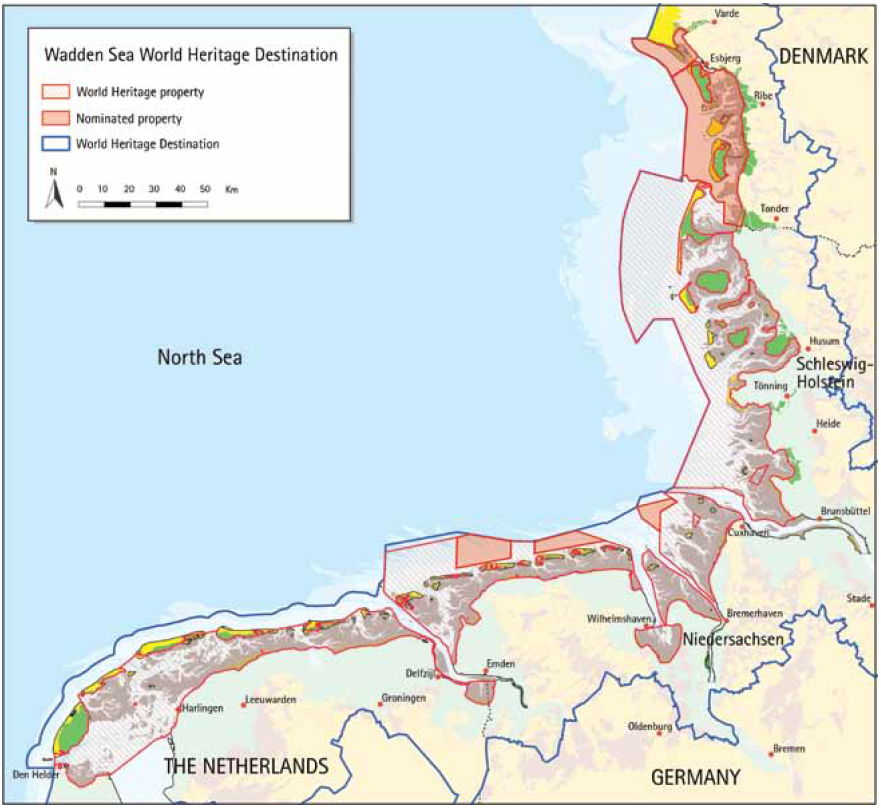
# **Sustainable tourism management in the Wadden Sea World Heritage**

1. Introduction

Tourism and recreational activity are a substantial part of the public experience of the Wadden Sea. They constitute a unique opportunity to experi­ence the natural and scenic values of the area and one which also makes an important contribution to the regional and local economy (Nomination Dossier, 2014). The Wadden Sea Region is one of the most visited tourism destinations in Northern Europe (QSR, 2017). Tourism along the coast of the World Heritage Destination area (Figure 1) is a highly developed economic sector and a major pillar for this foremost rural region. Revenues created by millions of day and overnight guests per year are contributing to economic stability as well as the acceptance and support of nature protection in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination area (QSR, 2017). On many of the islands and some mainland locations tourism is the main source of income and contributes significantly to sustaining local employment (STS, 2014).

However, tourism also may potentially have a negative impact on the key values of the Wadden Sea. The majority of the tour­ist activities, including the development of e.g. infrastructure, take place outside the Wadden Sea World Heritage property, but all activities are intimately linked to the property (Nomination Dossier, 2014).



**Figure 1.** Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination defined in the STS 2014. For the purpose of the Quality Status Reports 2004, 2009 and 2016, the geographical area of measurement for tourism refers to the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination.

[Note: map of the WH Destination and WH property to be updated -without the nominated property]

Sustainable tourism in the WSWH includes a range of aspects from services offered in the region (i.e. accommodation, traffic infrastructure), visitor attractions, activities offer, marketing and promotion, as well as management to avoid negative impacts and leverage conservation of the Wadden Sea ecosystem. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) declares that effective management of the property needs to ensure an ecosystem approach that integrates the management of the existing protected areas with other key activities occurring in the property such as tourism (IUCN, 2014).

## Sustainable tourism development in the Wadden Sea

Sustainable tourism is a success story in the Wadden Sea. Already in 1997… [Note: to review and complete timeline with experts and people that where part of this development. Emphasize the milestones or key aspects.]

**Table 1.** Timeline of important facts and milestones regarding tourism initiatives and actions in the TWSC.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Milestone** |
| 1997 | Wadden Sea Plan with joint visions for the sustainable development of tourism and recreational use in the entire Wadden Sea Region for the next 20 years, i.e. the Wadden Sea, the Wadden Sea islands and the adjacent mainland areas adopted in the Stade Declaration. |
| … | … |
| 2009 | Request from World Heritage Committe to develop a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism (see Statement of OUV 2009) |
| 2010 | Wadden Sea Plan update with targets for habitats and species describing the tourism and recreation trilateral policy and management to reach these targets. |
| 2010 | First PROWAD project to… |
| 2010 | Establishment of the trilateral working group on sustainable tourism (forming of networks) |
| 2014 | Strategy for Sustainable Tourism (adopted in the Toender Declaration) |
| 2014 | Action plan for the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism as a living document |
| 2014-now | Implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism with the support of PROWAD follow up projects: Wadden Agenda, Wadden Agenda 2.0, NAKUWA, PROWAD LINK) |
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## The current status (based on available current information)

The number of guests currently visiting the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination and its development over the last 30 years can’t be extracted from solid and reliable data. The availability of data is very heterogeneous, full of gaps and of limited comparability. In some areas the “grey market” is not recorded and the underlying geographic area is not identical with the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination. Subject to these limitations, the overall picture is that in most parts of the Wadden Sea region the number of guests and overnight stays has increased in recent years (NIT, 2019 and QSR-tourism, 2017).

[Note: to check for the most recent and relevant information]

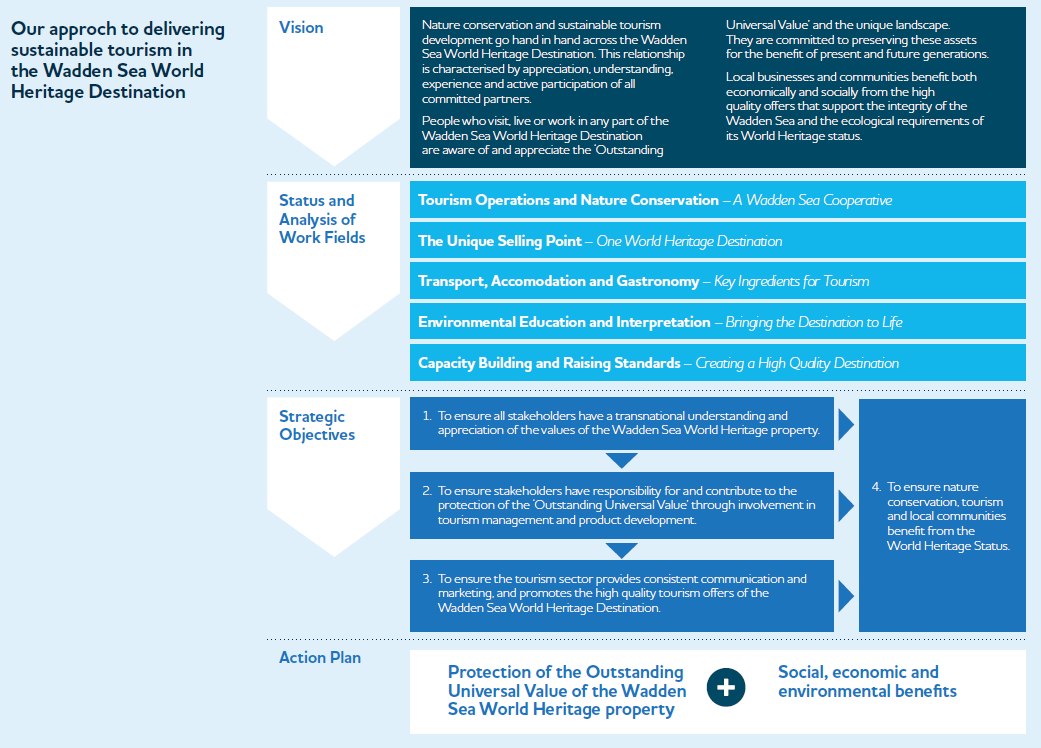
## Common ground (trilateral agreements)

The tourist and recreational activities in and adjacent to the World Heritage property are, as appropriate, comprehensively regulated. The Wadden Sea Plan (adopted in 1997 and updated in 2010) defines targets for habitats and species and describes trilateral policy and management to reach these targets. Economic activities and development remain possible within the constraints of suitable protection and natural development of the Wadden Sea (§18 WSP, 2010).

Tourism and recreation activities must be continuously balanced in a harmonious relationship between the needs of society and ecological integrity. Each country implements zoning systems and enforces the regulation of activities in the Wadden Sea Conservation area (Map) in accordance with trilateral policies. Policies for tourism and recreation activities management are directed to avoid or reduce any potential impact on tidal areas (tidal flats and subtidal areas). Policies related to speed limits and the zonation of different water sports are aimed to guard birds and marine mammals. The implementation of information systems and zoning by trails and routes are policies to be applied to reduce disturbances on salt marshes, beaches and dunes. The trilateral tourism and recreation policies from the Wadden Sea Plan are in Annex 1.

The strategy to plan and deliver sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Destination, is laid out in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (STS). STS was developed by the Task Group Sustainable Tourism consisting of tourism and nature conservation stakeholders from the three countries and was adopted in the Ministerial Conference in 2014. The STS’s common vision statement and the four strategic objectives are presented in Figure 2. The STS adds value to the existing local, regional, national and trilateral initiatives by creating synergies and new partnerships to strengthen the cooperation and commitment of stakeholders.

The implementation of the strategy and the action plan is coordinated and oversighted by the trilateral Network Group Sustainable Tourism (NG-ST) in a participatory approach with the relevant stakeholders. For the implementation of the STS’s action plan, the NG-ST builds on the existing structures in the three countries, which include a.o. governmental bodies, advisory boards, tourism and marketing organisations and existing World Heritage coordination structures such as the Wadden Sea Forum as independent trilateral stakeholder forum and the WST? [Note: to check with NG-ST, WSF and WST].



**Figure 2.** Sustainable Tourism Strategy in a nutshell (2014).

## Legal framework supporting the implementation of the common agreements

[Note: please if you know about the legal framework review and update this table. When finished we will summarise in a text and a shorter easier to read table]

**Table 2.** Policy framework supporting the common agreements. NOTE: MORE? Please add. In the future and if it doesn’t exist yet, we could shorten this information of this table in a flyer or another material that makes it easier to communicate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Legal framework addressing tourism | Short description |
| Europe | [Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime spatial planning](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/index_en.htm)  (2013) | The Commission adopted on 12 March 2013 a new initiative on Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management. Integrated coastal management aims for the coordinated application of the different policies affecting the coastal zone and related to activities such as nature protection, aquaculture, fisheries, agriculture, industry, off shore wind energy, shipping, tourism, development of infrastructure and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. It will contribute to sustainable development of coastal zones by the application of an approach that respects the limits of natural resources and ecosystems, the so-called 'ecosystem based approach'. |
| Trilateral | Joint Declaration 1982 and Wadden Sea Plan 1997 |  |
| Trilateral | [Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan](https://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/resources/sustainable-tourism-wadden-sea-world-heritage-destination) (2014) | The strategy was developed through partnership between nature conservation organisations, governments, the tourism sector and NGOs in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. It’s a strategy that outlines the true potential that exists for tourism in the Wadden Sea and how, by supporting and protecting the ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV) of this World Heritage site, we can all reap the benefits socially, economically and environmentally. |
| …the Netherlands | Key National Planning Decision (PKB) | **o. Recreation**  Government policy with regard to recreation on the Wadden Sea is aimed at securing and maintaining control over recreational exploitation and developing sustainable forms of recreation, taking as its basic premise the natural resilience of the area. Recreational exploitation is governed by a zoning system which spares the areas that are susceptible to disturbance. A map with a broadly considered recreational zoning system is included in the appendix to this PKB (PKB map B).  No new marinas may be constructed in or directly adjoining the Wadden Sea. At the initiative of the Wadden Provinces, an agreement is being drawn up between the government, the Wadden Provinces and the Wadden Municipalities. This includes an integrated policy aimed at securing and maintaining control over recreation and tourism on the Wadden Sea. If the agreement has not yet come into force by 31 December 2007 and it still proves necessary to adopt a capacity related  policy for marinas, the Cabinet will partially revise this section of the PKB. The Wadden Sea must not be used for waterskiing, jetskiing and similar motorized activities, apart from the existing high-speed zone near Oudeschild. The existing high-speed zone near Den Helder is being closed. The Wadden Provinces are requested to flesh out the recreational policy for the Wadden Sea in the light of this PKB. |
| Germany |  |  |
| Lower Saxony | National Park Act:  Zoning and demarcation, permitted activities | **Zoning**  **Section 5 Division into zones:** (1) 1The national park shall be divided into three zones, as shown in the maps pursuant to Section 3 (1):  1. Core zone (Zone I) – red,  2. Transition zone (Zone II) – green,  3. Recreation zone (Zone III) – yellow.  **Section 15 Recreation zone**  (1) 1The recreation zone may be used only for recreation, especially for such activities as walking, camping, swimming, sitting in beach baskets, horseback-riding, fishing, collection of mussels, kite-flying and sports activities. 2Use of motorised vehicles, and erection of beach igloos, mobile changing cabins and toilets, and of similar mobile facilities, shall be permitted to the extent required to make uses permitted under Sentence 1 possible.  (2) In particular, it shall be prohibited 1. to erect camping tents or to set up caravans, 2. to hold noise-intensive events, 3. to drive beach buggies, or similar motorised recreational vehicles, on the beach, and 4. to erect structures, except as permitted under Paragraph 1 Sentence 2.  (3) Noise-intensive events, except for motor-sports events, may be permitted in individual cases, to an extent in keeping with the protection purpose.  (4) Removal and filling of sand, for purposes of beach maintenance, shall be permitted, to an extent in keeping with the protection purpose.  (5) Uses pursuant to Paragraph 1 Sentence 1 shall be restricted, via individual orders, where they can lead to destruction, or to significant or lasting impairment, of a biotope within the meaning of Article 20 c  (1) of the Federal Nature Conservation Act and are not required for predominating reasons of the public interest.  **Section 20 Provision of information**  (2) 1Informational and educational activities should have the function of helping to achieve the national park's protection purpose and to enhance public awareness of ecological relationships. 2Such activities should call attention to the possibilities for experiencing nature and engaging in recreation that the national park offers, and it should communicate the national park's aims to the public. 3Such activities should also explain work carried out in the national park, including scientific studies and research projects.  **Section 24 Responsibilities**  (4) 1The national park's administration shall be responsible for measures pursuant to Section 63 of Lower Saxony's Nature Conservation in the core zone and in non-municipal sections of the transition zone and  recreation zone located below the mean high-tide water line, including such areas located within the Lüneburg administrative district. 2Otherwise, the relevant lower nature conservation authorities shall be  competent. (1) In addition to having responsibility for tasks assigned to it in Arts. 7, 8 and 20 to 22, the national park's administration shall also be responsible for 3. Permitting exceptions, and granting exemptions, in the transition zone and recreation zone, except where a lower nature conservation authority is responsible pursuant to Paragraph 2, and granting exemptions in the core zone.  **Section 25 Regional interests** In their decisions pursuant to this Act, the competent authorities shall take account of the local population's interests in safeguarding and developing their living and working conditions, as well as the interests of regional development, commerce and business and tourism, to an extent in keeping with the protection purpose.  The Advisory Board of the Niedersachsen Na­tional Park is composed of representatives of the regional and local governments, regional stake­holders representing commercial, recreational and environmental interests and of scientific institu­tions |
| Hamburg | National Park Act | The Hamburg National Park is divided into two Zones:  **Zone I** is reserved for the establishment and succession of natural dynamics covering about 90% of the national park. Public access is prohibited with the exception of (mainly tidal flat) walking routes, and the tidal flats northeast of the island Neuwerk (“Kleiner Vogelsand”). **Zone II** (about 10 %) is reserved for recreation, sustainable tourism and nature experience activities which are in line with the national park aims. |
| Schleswig-Holstein | National Park Act  Art 6 Actions and measures allowed in protection zones 1 and 2 and governance | **Art 2 Protection purpose and other purposes**  (3) Unreasonable impairments of the interests and traditional uses of the local population shall be avoided. All usage interests shall be fairly  balanced with the protection purpose in general and shall be fairly balanced in individual cases. By having a positive impact on tourism and the region's image, nature conservation, via the national park, should promote sustainable development in the interest of improving the living and working conditions of the people who live in the general area.  **Art 6 Permissible measures and uses, exceptions, exemptions**  (6) The Ministry, acting in agreement with the responsible boards of  trustees, may, by means of ordinances, 1. permit additional measures and uses in protection zone 2, for purposes of recreation, tourism and other economic purposes, and either on a generally or regionally limited basis, where such action is compatible with the protection purpose and does not conflict with other interests of nature conservation and landscape management;  One representative each from the sector of tourism appointed to be a member in the board of trustees (Kuratorium) |
|  | specific concepts to rule the recreational use of touristic hotspots (Hamburger Hallig, Westerhever, Sankt Peter Ording) | NOTE: to look for this |
|  | Bewerbungsunterlagen für die Nationalpark-Partnerschaft, Stand 09.05.2017; Vertrag für Nationalpark-Partnerschaften  National Park Partnership application documents and contracts | NOTE: to look for this |
|  | Freiwillige Vereinbarung Wassersport  Voluntary water sports agreement | NOTE: to look for this |
| Denmark | Nature Protection Act (last amended 2009)  Danish Statutory Order on the Nature and Wild­life Reserve Wadden Sea (1979,1982, last amended 1992)  Act on National Parks (2007)  Coastal Protection Act (last amended 2009) | Statutory Order on the Wadden Sea National Park  **Part 2**  *Objectives for development of the national park*  **3.** The Wadden Sea National Park shall be developed taking into consideration the safety of the local population and applying the following overall objectives:  6) The development of outdoor activities and tourism shall be on a sustainable basis and in collaboration with the local population, the tourist industry and institutions providing information about the area.  Tourism and recreational activities are com­prehensively regulated in the Danish Wadden Sea primarily in the context of the **Statutory Order on the Nature and Wild Life Reserve**. Access to certain areas is prohibited predominantly for the whole year. This concerns areas important for seals and roosting and breeding birds and other ecologically sensitive areas covering the island of Langli and areas around the island, the high sands of Jordsand, Koresand, Lammelæger, Trinden and Keldsand and the reclamation fields of Rømø causeway and the ebbe road to Mandø, and the southerns part of the Lister Deep.  Any form of motorized transport and the use of any means of transport propelled by sail is prohib­ited in the reserve. Car traffic is however allowed in specific zones on the beaches of the islands of Rømø and Fanø and on the Mandø ebbe road.  Navigation east of the baseline at a speed exceeding 10 knots is only permitted within buoyed areas of the major shipping channels of the Grådyb, Knudedyb and Listerdyb. Any navigation by water scooters, jet skis, water skis catamarans and vessels propelled by air propels and windsurfing is in principle prohibited in the area. Windsurf­ing and navigation with catamarans is allowed in specifically designated areas along the west coast of Skallingen, Fanø and Rømø and in the the Grådyb in the summer half year. The activities at the beaches are regulated in dedicated zones where windsurfing is allowed, and on the islands of Rømø there are zones specificly dedicated for kite buggy and beach sailing. |

## Threats

There are potential conflicts and issues of concern in relation to tourism. The most obvious perhaps is that World Heritage status may result in increased numbers of visitors, and those visitors may negatively affect the natural values of the Wadden Sea. For example, shoreline activities and recreation could affect rare species of beach breeding birds (protec­tive measures have been successful for the colony-breeding little tern, but Kentish plover and great ringed plover show an ongoing decline and need further protection effort, Nomination Dossier, 2014), or inadequate planning of tourism facilities and buildings in the coastal zone close to sensitive nature areas are issues of concern (STS, 2014).

Data about changes and repercussions on the site integrity in relation to tourism/recreational impacts, the regional tourism economy, visitors’ preference and residents’ opinions can provide important information for the management of the World Heritage Site. To date, there is no joint monitoring programme or methodology to evaluate these changes and the effects on regional development (STS, 2014).

[NOTE: CWSS is working on a detailed description of impacts to be reviewed with NG-ST in the workshop in September 2020]

## Opportunities

This is a list of opportunities to discuss how much information we want to add and how to take advantage of these when defining strategies and actions for management.

* [Interreg 5A Projekt NAKUWA](https://www.interreg5a.eu/en/) - Development and marketing cross-border products and services in the areas of natural and cultural tourism Germany, Denmark2017-2020
* Interreg 5A Project “Watten-Agenda” + “Watten-Agenda 2.0” - Cross-border development and implementation of environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism to preserve and protect the Wadden Sea ecosystem. The Netherlands + Germany (2014 – 2018 & 2018 – 2022)
* [Interreg 5B Projekt „PROWAD LINK“](https://northsearegion.eu/prowad-link/) - Protect & Prosper: Benefits through linking sustainable growth with nature protection Germany, Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway, UK 2018-2021
* UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme
* Dark sky
* Renewable energy = zero emissions transport in the WSWH
* International cooperation through the STS
* Joint marketing and communication (like ITB)
* Voluntary agreements = partnerships as a mean to support management

## Future trends

[NOTE: To be discussed in the context of our work, SIMO + PHub]

There is no doubt that the World Heritage status can be even further exploited in the development and marketing of tourism in the Wadden Sea Region through focused use of the heritage brand in the marketing and promotion of tourism, and through the engagement of the tourism sector and visitors in the protection of its Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea. The implementation of the strategy on “Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage” has laid the foundation to ensure that tourism development and nature conservation will mutually benefit. Raising awareness about the natural values of the Wadden Sea, also among tourism stakeholders, may contribute towards increasing the number of visitors to the region and contribute to an emotional attachment to the protected area and public support for the conservation programmes (QSR, 2017).

## Sources of information

[Note: to cite properly and include all references]

Nomination dossier (2008, 2014)

QSR (2017)

WSP 2010

ST Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2017

Facts and Figures of the Wadden Sea Region

Part I of the Baseline Study for the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea

June 2012, Europarc Consulting

Baseline Inventory and Analysis: Overview of current sustainable tourism activities in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, an analysis of the gaps and synergies with ideas for future directions

Part II of the Baseline Study for the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea

June 2012, Europarc Consulting.

**Annex 1**

WSP, 2010: §4.28 (Identical with §9.21 and §10.5)

The recreational values of the Wadden Sea will be maintained for the benefit of man and nature. To this end in the Nature Conservation Area,

* in the ecologically most sensitive areas, zones have been or will be established where no recreational activities, including excursion ships and recreational boating, is allowed;
* the use of jet skis, water skis and similar motorized equipment has been, or will be, prohibited, or limited, to small designated areas;
* new marinas will be avoided and the extension of the existing marina capacity will only be allowed within the approved levels;
* water sports, like wind surfing have to be balanced with the needs of nature protection and bathing tourism;
* Kitesurfing can distort nature values, in particular roosting sites for birds. The aim is a harmonised approach to kitesurfing consisting of zoning where the activity is allowed under conditions.

WSP, 2010: §4.29 (Identical with §9.22 and §10.6)

Speed limits for ships have been imposed, taking into account safety, environmental recreational and fishery factors.

WSP, 2010: §4.30

The negative effects of hovercraft and hydrofoil craft and other high-speed craft are minimised by the following strategies:

* In The Netherlands and Germany, hovercraft and hydrofoil craft are forbidden in the tidal area of the Nature Conservation Area; new, other high speed craft are forbidden (in Germany) outside the designated shipping routes in the area (in The Netherlands);
* In Denmark, applications for new, high-speed craft can only be granted on the basis of an Environmental Impact Assessment and if it is not in conflict with the nature protection targets for the area.

WSP, 2010: §4.31 (Identical with §3.8 and §5.6)

Disturbance and damage caused by recreation and tourism will be further reduced through information systems, and/or temporal and spatial zoning, e.g. network of trails and routes.

WSP, 2010: §4.32

Experience of nature and landscape should be made possible by appropriate measures. It is the aim to guide recreational activities and tourism by information systems, as well as temporal and/or spatial zonation, routing systems and field guidance in such a way that people can enjoy unspoiled nature, and disturbances and damages are minimised.

WSP, 2010: §4.30

For beaches and dunes, the trilateral policy takes into account the demands of recreation and tourism, coastal flood defence and protection and natural values, like high geomorphological dynamics and important breeding areas. Where possible, the natural situation should be increased by ‘hands-off management’ (WSP, 2010).”