

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 41)

15 May 2023
Esbjerg, Denmark



Agenda Item:	5.2 Nature conservation and integrated ecosystem management
Subject:	Progress report TG-M
Document No.:	WSB 41/5.2/1
Date:	21 April 2023
Submitted by:	TG-M

This document contains a progress report of the Task Group Management (TG-M).

Since WSB 38, TG-M had an online meeting on 16 November 2022 (TG-M 22-4), and an additional joint online meeting with the Expert group Marine Mammals (EG-MM) on 23 February 2023 to identify key research questions that may help to explain changes in harbour seal numbers.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information.

Task Group Management (TG-M) progress report to WSB 41

Since the last Task Group Management (TG-M) report to WSB 38, the TG-M has progressed on topics 5 to 7, respectively accompanied/supported the topics 1 to 4:

1. Flyway & Breeding Birds

In 2023, experts from Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands met in Hamburg (27.-28. February) to discuss the use of drones in monitoring breeding birds and migratory birds in the Wadden Sea. This was a follow-up from a workshop conducted 4 years ago. Several promising examples were demonstrated on how drones can be used to monitor specific bird species, but also the limitations were discussed.

In preparation for the next breeding season, a second bird flu workshop was conducted in March 2023 (22-24 March 2023) in Wilhelmshaven. With the help of a risk assessment, key pathways for entry and exposure of the virus were identified and potential management measures discussed. The focus was on Sandwich terns, the most flu-affected species in the Wadden Sea in 2022. Management guidelines on the 'Mitigation and data collection strategies for avian influenza in bird colonies in the Wadden Sea' will be published at the beginning of next week and shared with the members of the WSB to take note. Plans exist to publish the method of using an interdisciplinary ecological risk assessment to estimate the risk of introduction of HPAIV in breeding bird colonies and further results in the form of a scientific paper.

The 4th total waterbird counts along the East Atlantic Flyway were conducted in January 2023. Experts from the Wadden Sea provided support in several African countries. Most data have already been submitted and are being quality checked. The EAF census report (given a brief overview on national efforts) is expected to be published by CWSS/Sovon at the end of 2023. The more comprehensive flyway assessment report shall be published by CWSS/Sovon at the end of 2024.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information

2. Fish targets / Swimway

The Swimway conference 2024 (see [WSB 38/5.2.1 TG-M Progress report](#)) is planned to be held from 17 – 19 April, in collaboration with the international symposium about "Free Flowing Rivers" (Herman Wanningen, World Fish Migration Foundation) on 15 -17 April in Groningen, Netherlands. On 17 April joint excursions will be offered.

The Dutch Expert Group (EG)-Swimway member Ms Paddy Walker; Tethys: aquatic ecosystem advice; Netherlands, has been elected by EG-Swimway as its new chairperson.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information

3. Seal Management Plan/ Harbour porpoises

A workshop discussing the state of stranding networks for marine mammals in the different Wadden Sea regions was conducted in Büsum on 27 October 2022. The report of the workshop that provides an overview of the different networks and provides recommendations on how to improve the monitoring of stranded animals was finalized in March 2023 and shared with all participants of the workshop and the Task Group Management on 20 March 2023 for internal considerations by the local authorities.

In response to the drop in harbour seal numbers in 2022, TG-M and EG-MM had a bilateral online meeting on 23 February 2023 to identify key research questions that may help to explain changes in harbour seal numbers.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information

4. Alien Species

The trilateral Expert Group Alien Species (EG-AS) is planning a trilateral workshop on alien species with respect to climate change in May 2023.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information

5. Energy

The Ad hoc group on Cables and Pipelines is in the process of drafting a project proposal on minimising the effects of the crossings of cables and pipelines on the OUV of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. The draft project proposal, supports the implementation of the SIMP.

The recent unexpected partial close-down of the of funds from the EU Interreg North Sea Programme in Call 3, poses a serious problem and the Ad hoc group must re-adjust the project initiative to other funding options on short notice. The WSB 41 will be informed accordingly.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information

6. Fisheries

In their TG-M 22-4 meeting, TG-M agreed to postpone a topical meeting for finalization of the Assessment of the Framework Sustainable Fisheries to the year 2023.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information

7. Marine litter

At TG-M 22-4, it was agreed by TG-M to approach the topic of marine litter in a two-phase approach: 1) collecting input to the roadmap and drafting a workplan (including relationship with the Single Integrated Management Plan (The SIMP) and 2) propose on a way to proceed, e.g., by means of a topical meeting, workshop or the installment of an ad hoc group.

Proposal: WSB is invited to note the information