

TRICMA² - Triple Crisis Meets Trilateral Cooperation

Effects of Biodiversity Loss, Climate Change, and
Pollution on Salt Marshes & Pathways to their
Sustainable Management

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Wadden Sea Research Projects: Information Meeting for stakeholders (20 Feb 2025)



Prof. Dr. Kai Jensen (Universität Hamburg)

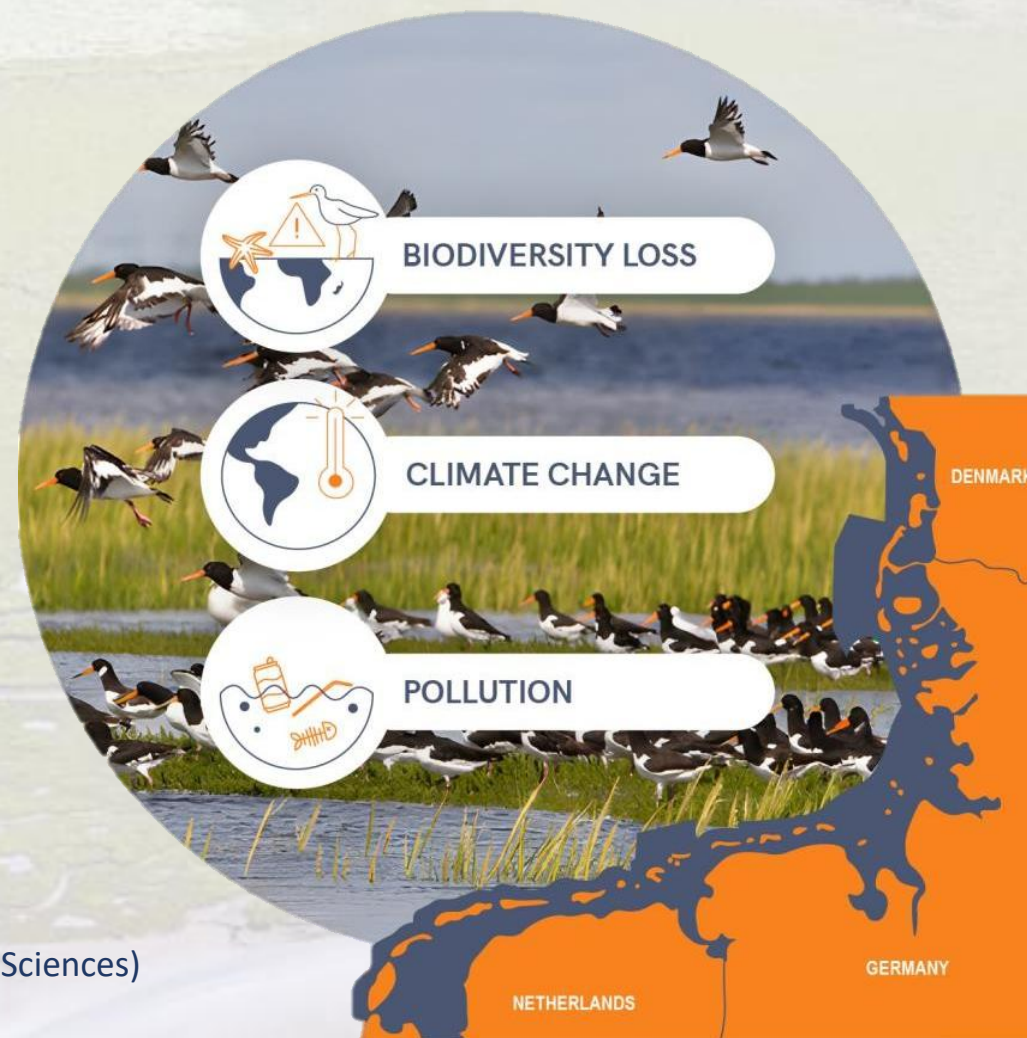
Prof. Dr. Peter Müller (University of Münster)

Dr. Philipp Schwemmer (Kiel University)

Dr. Andreas Waser (Alfred Wegener Institute)

Prof. Dr. Ir. Chris Smit (University of Groningen)

Prof. Dr. Loes Witteveen (Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences)



There is a need
to adapt and improve
the management and governance of Wadden
Sea salt marshes
in the face of pressures



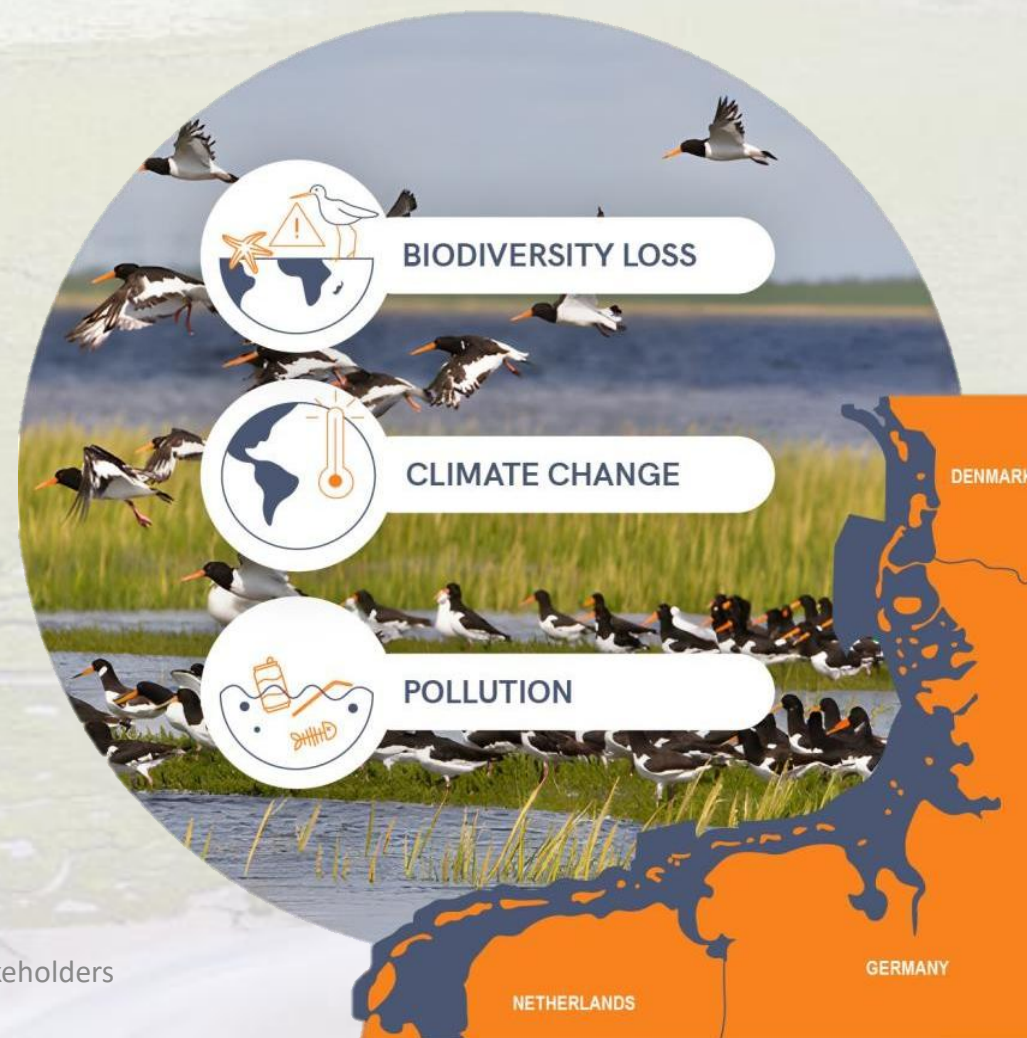
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Overarching goal:
Develop guiding principles
for future salt marsh management



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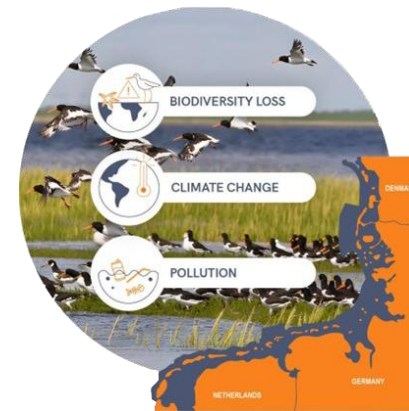
Salt marsh management

On a trilateral scale, management of salt marshes is highly diverse

Management context /
governance arena

Management activities

Great variety of actors



Research at the science-society interface

**Involve stakeholders in
complete research cycle**



**Create synergies between
diverse knowledges**

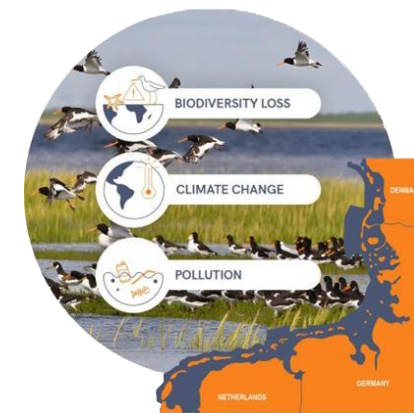
WP1

**SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL
LEARNING & SCIENCE-
SOCIETY INTERACTIONS**

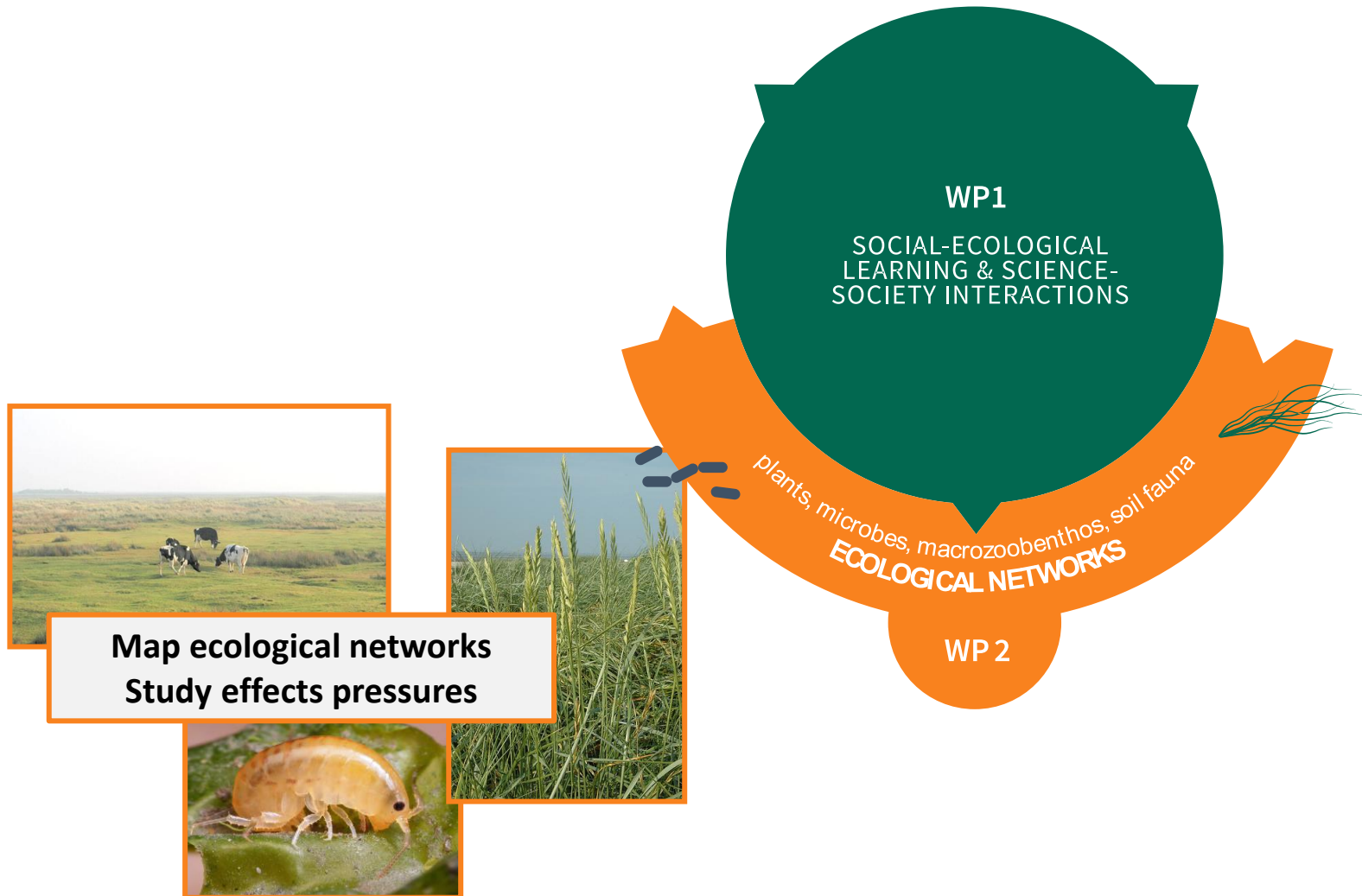
Youth as stakeholders



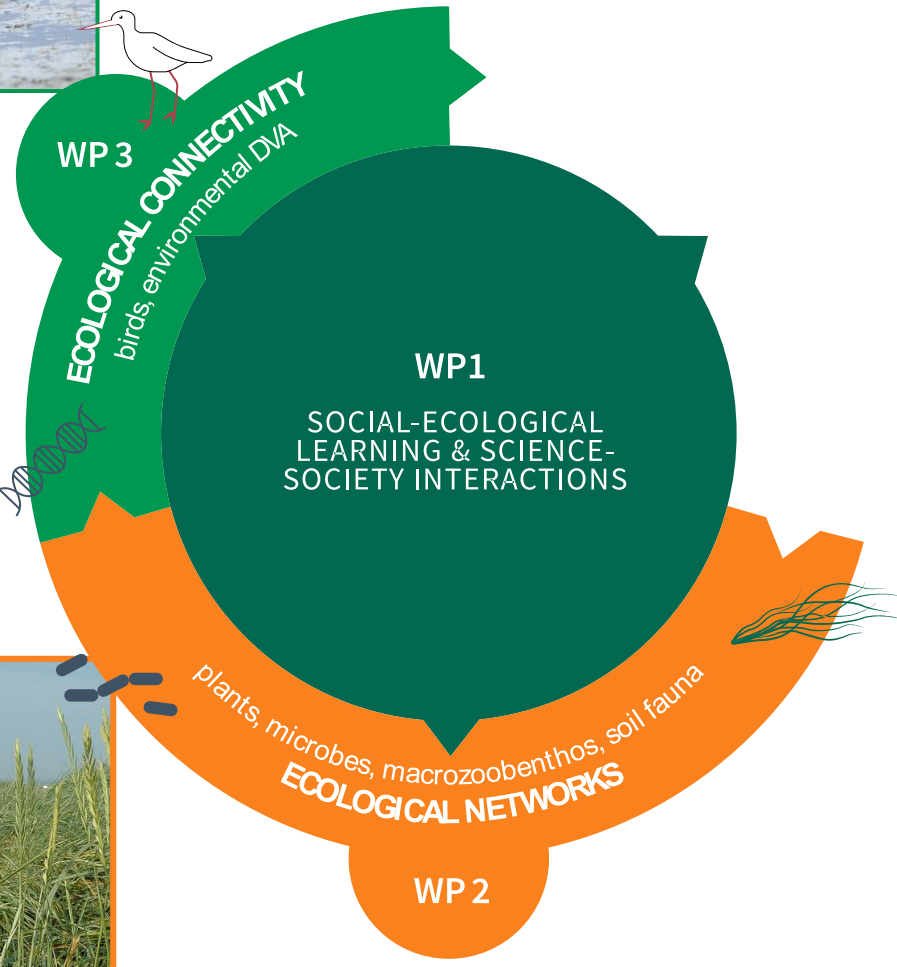
**Design social-ecological learning
trajectories to support sustainable
management of salt marshes**







Connectivity to hinterlands, mudflats
Habitat and diet in relation with pressures
Pollutant burdens



Map ecological networks
Study effects pressures

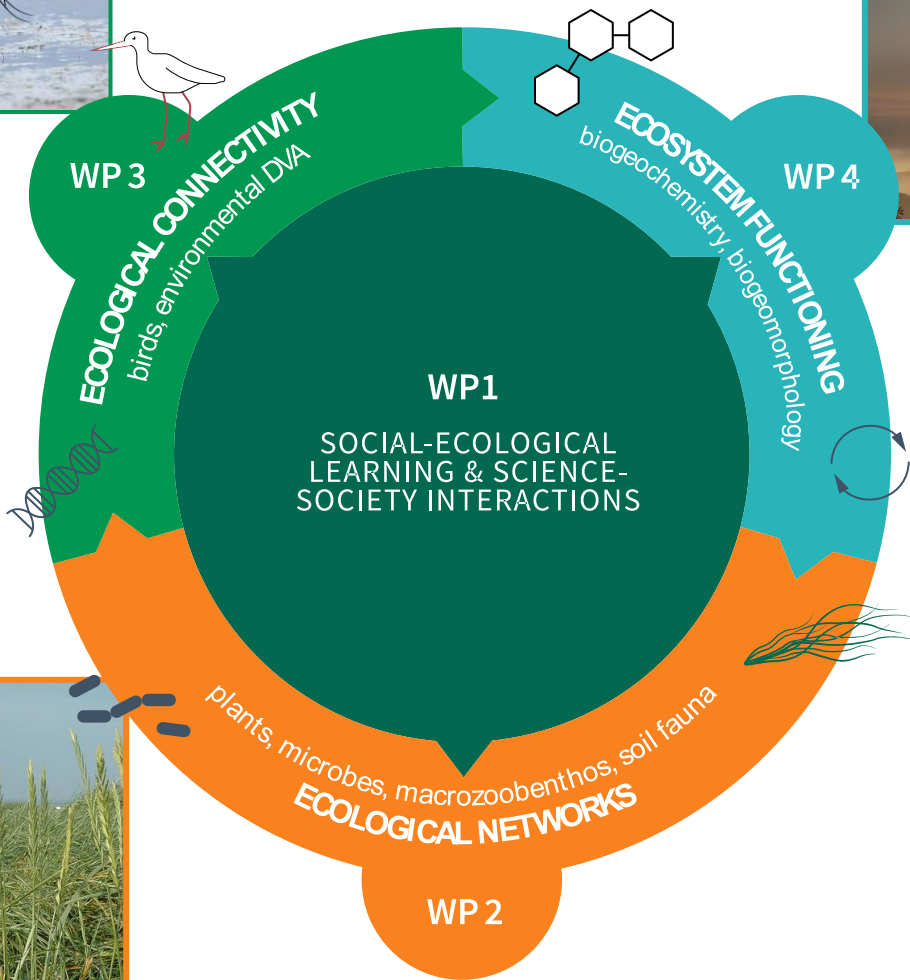


Connectivity to hinterlands, mudflats
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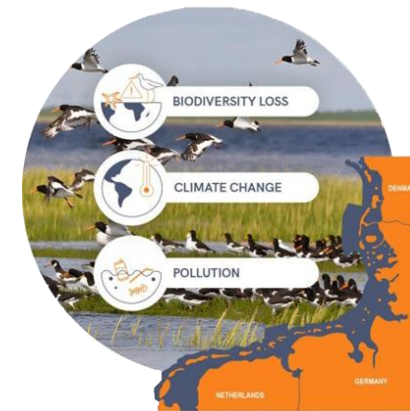


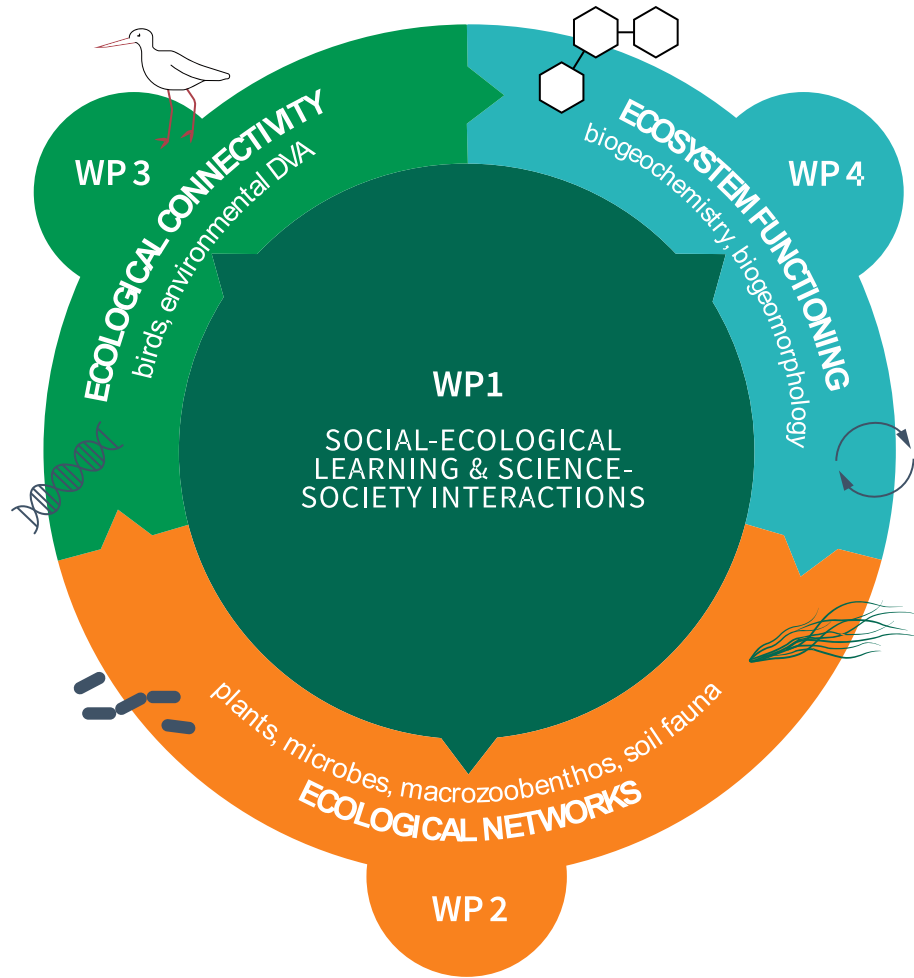
Map ecological networks
Study effects pressures

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Sediment accretion
Carbon storage
Greenhouse-gas cycling
Pollutant retention





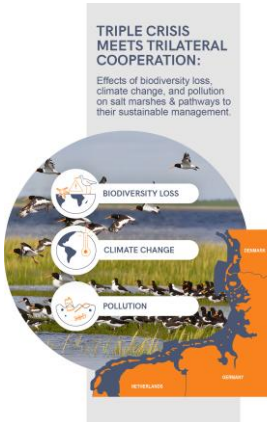
Overarching goal:
Develop guiding principles for future
salt marsh management



What is the meaning of future in TRICMA²

- Raising attention of future generations'
- Analyzing effects of future climate change

- Addressing future trilateral challenges together
- Principles for future salt-marsh management



IJR Biogeosciences

METHOD
10.1029/2022JG007550

Design and Assessment of a Novel Approach for Ecosystem Warming Experiments in High-Energy Tidal Wetlands

Key Points:

- Novel Ecosystem Response to Increased Temperatures (MERIT) is a novel ecosystem warming experiment in a high-energy coastal salt marsh
- MERIT addresses passive aboveground and active belowground warming to 1 m depth
- MERIT tests warming effects on ecosystem functioning along a marine-terrestrial ecotone

Supporting Information:
Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article.

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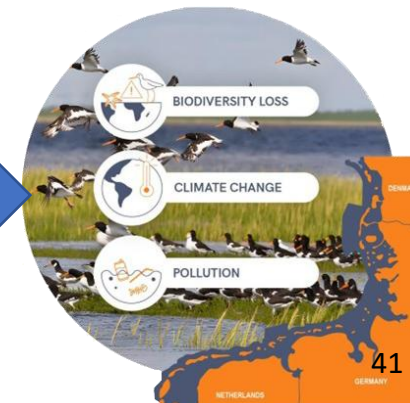
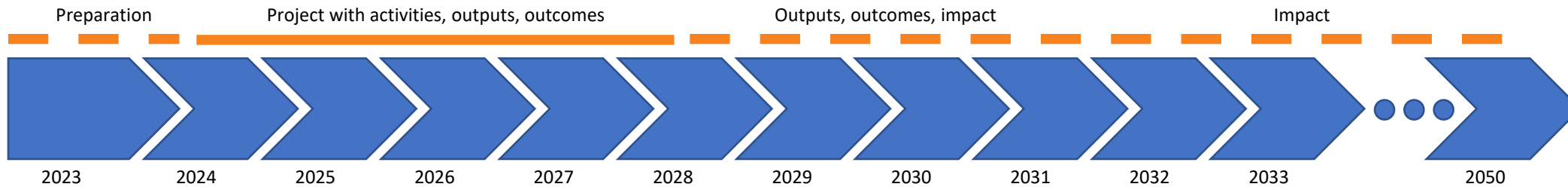
Citation:
Kirk, K. L., Mueller, P., Ross, M., Gossiaux, S., Osting, E., Horta, S., et al. (2022). Design and assessment of a novel approach for ecosystem warming experiments in high-energy tidal wetlands. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Biogeosciences*, 127, e2022JG007550. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2022JG007550>

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Author Contributions:
Conceptualization: K. L. Kirk, Peter Mueller, Kai Jensen, Stefan Thomsen
Data curation: K. L. Kirk, Stefan Thomsen

Abstract: Coastal salt marshes have an important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Direct and indirect responses to warming are expected to vary along the marine-terrestrial ecotone gradient, making ecosystem responses to warming at this marine-terrestrial ecotone complex. The MERIT Ecosystem Response to Increased Temperatures (MERIT) experiment was established in 2020 on the North Sea coast of Germany. Experimental plots are evenly distributed over three elevational marsh zones (low, mid, and high marsh) and include three temperature treatments (ambient, +2°C, +4°C). MERIT's novel design combines active warming (horizontal surface warming cables and embedded warming panel) with passive, partially covered domes. For performance assessment, temperature data between ambient and warmed plots were calculated and evaluated at seasonal, daily, and diurnal timescales. Linear Mixed Models with Random Maximum Likelihood evaluated warming treatment effects, and constraining environmental factors. MERIT was effective at ecosystem warming in this high-energy environment both above- and belowground. Mixed models show that warming treatment dominates environmental differences belowground and at the soil surface, along with factors such as wind speed, flooding duration, and solar radiation. Aboveground warming was lower than belowground warming, but the aboveground warming was similar to other open-air chamber experiments. The combination of passive aboveground warming and feedback-controlled active surface and belowground heating provides a setup for understanding warming effects on tidal ecosystems without altering the natural impacts of wind, radiation, and tidal fluctuations at high-energy conditions. Our design creates opportunities to expand future warming experiments to remote locations and technically challenging environments.

Plain Language Summary: Coastal vegetated ecosystems such as salt marshes have been highlighted for their important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation, especially in storing carbon. However, some of ecosystem functioning and biogeochemistry to warming are largely unknown and



Relevance of TRICMA for stakeholders

1) Co-create ecological knowledge

2) Involvement in co-development of Guiding Principles for salt marsh management

3) Join our work with secondary schools / Youth Wadden Academy



Relevance of TRICMA for stakeholders

1) Co-create ecological knowledge:

- Design of field observations / experiments (e.g. response of specific plants/animals of salt marshes to specific conditions)

Examples of possible (small) projects during stakeholder visits:

- Farmer: can you investigate mowed salt marsh as alternative to geese grazing on farms?
- Natuurmonumenten: what is impact of heat waves on species diversity of salt marshes?



Relevance of TRICMA for stakeholders

2) Involvement in co-development of Guiding Principles for future salt marsh management (under stress of triple crisis)

- Inclusive → visit stakeholders “at home”, listen to different perspectives
- Holistic → widen view of all involved from local/regional to trilateral
- Based on newly-created ecological knowledge

3) Join our work with secondary schools / Youth Wadden Academy

- Your perspectives heard by future generation
- Building network of young salt marsh ambassadors

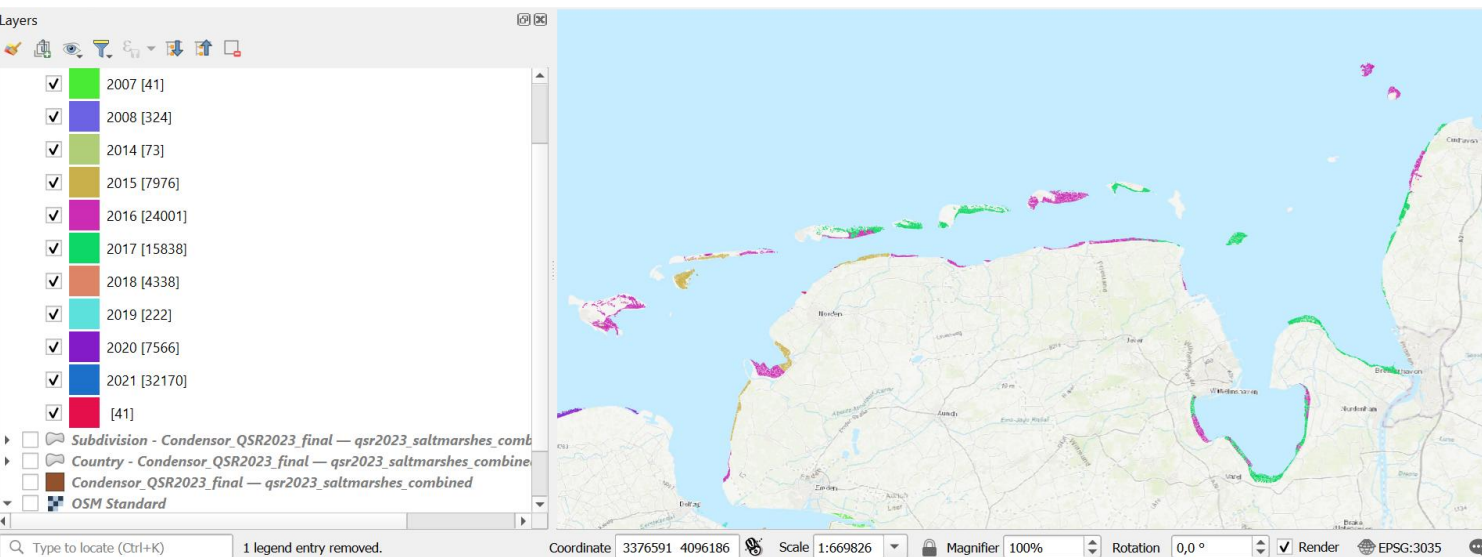


Relevance of TRICMA for stakeholders

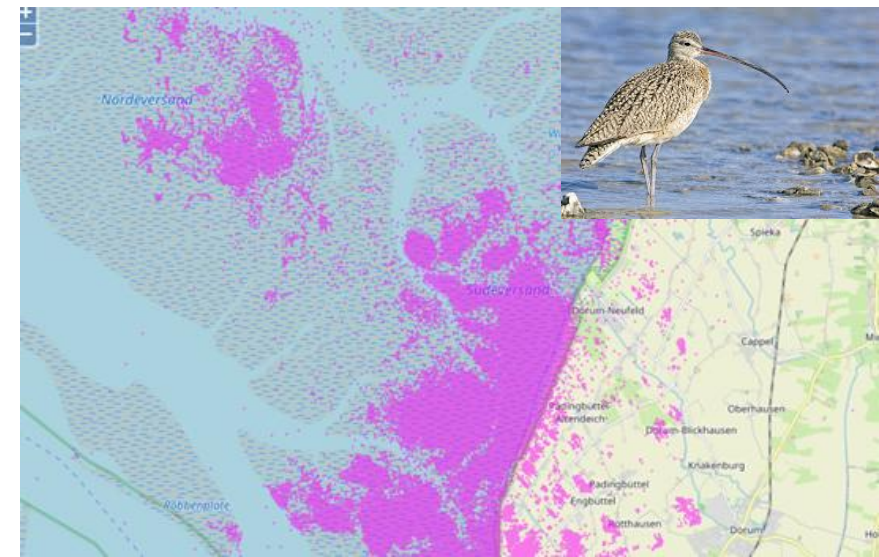
Access **harmonized** ecological data sets (once compiled):

- TMAP vegetation monitoring data for all NL/Lower Sax/Schleswig-Holstein/DK
- TMAP info on type of management (if possible?)
- Harmonized bird telemetry data (curlew, avocet, brent & barnacle geese)
- Field and experimental data on ecological networks

TMAP vegetation data; image by Filiz Kück



Curlew telemetry data: Phillip Schemmer





Industrial 'music' and climate woes deafen youth to water sector

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Much unknown about Wadden Sea salt marshes: carbon sinks?

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Control or not to control: Spartina taxa in salt marshes



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Threat to Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea Unesco World Heritage

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Knowledge is essential to co-create conservation management

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Dietrich and Lucka sign 'guiding principles' for management of salt marshes in the Wadden Sea

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Radical and global agenda for the 10th and final meeting of the Youth Advisory Board for Sustainable Salt Marsh Management

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Better understanding of future effects of climate change-induced coastal squeeze on birds



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Complex networks of the salt marshes are even complexer

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Salt marshes to keep pace with sea level rise

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