

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 45)

28 May 2025
Hamburg, Germany



Agenda Item:	4
Subject:	Announcements by CWSS
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The following paper gives a written overview of the announcements of CWSS to the WSB 45.

Proposal: The meeting is invited to **note** the document.

Announcements by CWSS to WSB45

1. Conference report: Swimway

The 2024 Swimway Conference, entitled “Applying scientific evidence to manage human impacts on fish life cycles”, was held between 17-19 April 2024 in Groningen, Netherlands. The [conference report](#) contains information on the programme and excursions, as well as an overview on contents of the thematic sessions and conclusions.

2. Workshop report: MANABAS COAST Nature Conservation and Coastal Flood Defence: How Much Salt Marsh Management Do We Want and Need in a Changing Climate?

Back-to-back to the Interreg North Sea MANABAS COAST project meeting, a workshop titled "Nature Conservation and Coastal Flood Defence: How Much Salt Marsh Management Do We Want and Need in a Changing Climate?" was organised by CWSS, the trilateral Expert Groups Climate Change Adaptation, Salt Marshes and Dunes, and partners of the MANABAS COAST project on 10 October in Groningen. A [workshop report](#) has been published by CWSS. It contains information on discussions and results of the workshop, as well as links to the presentations.

3. Social Media Workshop VI

On 26-27 February 2025, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat organised its 6th workshop for social media operators of TWSC partners. With 12 people from Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, it received the largest (and maximum) participation. The professionally led workshop focussed on new social media trends and developing skills in new tools and formats as well as offered the opportunity for exchange and the development of new joint campaigns. The participant feedback was overall positive and a next workshop in the coming year was requested.

4. NG-ST Trilateral Workshop Series: Final report

The NG-ST Trilateral Workshop Series aimed to strengthen cross-border cooperation and advance sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea region. As part of the 2024 STS Evaluation, the workshops assessed current strategies, refined key projects, and outlined next steps for collaboration among stakeholders from Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

Three in-person workshops and one online session were held. The first (Sept 2024) focused on evaluating the STS. The second (Oct 2024) identified priority areas and key challenges. The third (Nov 2024) explored themes for a future trilateral project. A follow-up online workshop (Jan 2025) finalized action plans, aligned goals, and addressed funding prospects.

All workshops were successfully completed and significantly advanced NG-ST's efforts. The [final report](#) captures key insights, potential future work packages, and potential funding paths—laying a solid foundation for ongoing cross-border cooperation and targeted sustainable tourism development.

5. Wadden Sea World Heritage Summer School

Applications are now open for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Summer School 2025, taking place from 18-29 August 2025. The application deadline is 15 May 2025, and participation is limited to 16 students.

This year's Summer School is titled "Wadden Sea Under Pressure – Solving Wicked Problems in Times of Climate Change" and begins in Ribe, Denmark, before traveling to Sylt, Germany, and concluding in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, where participants will attend the annual Wadden Sea Day symposium. It is a joint initiative led by the Alfred-Wegener-Institute, FH Westküste University of Applied Sciences, the Waddenacademie, and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, with support from the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park Authority and the Danish Wadden Sea National Park. More information [here](#).

6. DOIs for thematic Quality Status Reports

All thematic Wadden Sea Quality Status Report published since 2017 now carries a DOI (via the platform [zenodo](#)). All reports also remain on our [QSR website](#) and now include a button to the PDF on zenodo instead of the previously displayed PDF generator.

7. Social media campaign on OUV

In the framework of the International Wadden Sea School and together with WWF Germany and the German Wadden Sea National Park Authorities, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat asked elementary school kids from the Norderney Biosphere: What makes the Wadden Sea a World Heritage Site? What is this 'Outstanding Universal Value' that UNESCO always talks about? The answers in [five short clips](#) were published on social media and distributed in the IWSS network in February 2025. The spoken language of the videos is German, subtitles are also available in Danish, Dutch, and English.

8. Climate resilient East Atlantic Flyway project – 2025 activities funded

The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative received 10-month funding from the German International Climate Initiative (IKI) for the project 'Climate Resilience for Critical Sites for Migratory Birds and People along the East Atlantic Flyway'. With 14 partners from 11 countries, the project aims to increase local capacities in key sites in Mauritania, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau to assess drivers of population changes and explore how these can be better addressed through management, policies or livelihood developments. Collaborations with partners from additional project countries, from Morocco to South Africa, ensure strengthening the flyway network and that first steps are being taken to integrate project results into a wider context.

Due to the early German parliamentary elections on 23 February 2025, the 20th German Bundestag has not adopted a federal budget for 2025. As a result, a "provisional budget" has been in force since 1 January 2025. The provisional budget management allows new budgetary commitments to a very limited extent only. It is expected that the 21st German Bundestag, which was elected in February, will decide on the federal budget for 2025 once a new federal government has been formed. It is not possible to predict, when exactly the federal budget for 2025 will be approved. For the International Climate Initiative, this means that projects that have already been approved will continue to be funded under the provisional budget. With regard to project proposals and corresponding activities, that have not yet been approved: The planned objectives and measures of the project continue to correspond with strategic IKI-objectives so that we continue to support the implementation of the project. However, the German Bundestag ultimately decides on the upcoming federal budget and thus on the budgetary framework to fund new IKI-funding measures. Thus, the continuation of the project beyond 2025 has not been approved yet.

To implement the task Rebecca Stewart was employed as project officer and Elvis Lyonga Edimo as communication officer.

9. EU Technical Support Instrument

For the past two years, a project called "FLYWAY," funded by European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) under its Technical Support Instrument (TSI), has explored new technologies to help monitor and understand the factors driving population declines, a crucial step for

finding adequate conservation measures to protect these birds. The results of this project have been published in January, together with a roadmap for the implementation of advanced monitoring activities. To build on these results, the EU commission encouraged the Wadden Sea countries to submit a follow-up project. The new project labelled 'Environmental Monitoring Tools for Adaptive Management of Coastal Wetlands for Migratory Birds' has been selected for funding and is expected to start in September 2025, in collaboration with other EU member states like Belgium and Spain.

10. East Atlantic Flyway Assessment 2023

The new East Atlantic Flyway Assessment report, building on the data from the 2023 total counts will be published on World Migratory Bird Day, 10 May 2025. Trends in numbers for 88 flyway populations were calculated. While the long-term trends are similar to previous assessments, looking at the past ten years, a gradual shift indicates that populations have started to decrease.

11. Collaboration with UNESCO Marine Programme: Climate Vulnerability and Adaptation Measures

The *Building Accountability in MPA Science and Management Through Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Measures at UNESCO World Heritage Sites* project, proposed by the UNESCO Marine Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission has been approved.

The project will be piloted in two sites: Ilulisat in Denmark and Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania.

The Wadden Sea will play a modest role by contributing knowledge and experience on the climate vulnerability assessment on the OUV and supporting the development of a basic climate model (by Helmholtz Research Center Hereon), building on the MoU with Banc d'Arguin in the framework of the Flyway Initiative and the Climate resilient East Atlantic Flyway project.

12. Collaboration with UNESCO Marine Programme: UNESCO Environmental DNA Expeditions

UNESCO's Environmental DNA (eDNA) Expeditions is a global citizen science initiative designed to expand understanding of marine biodiversity and assess the impacts of climate change on the distribution of marine life across World Heritage marine sites. In its first phase, the eDNA Expeditions collected biodiversity data from 21 of UNESCO's 51 marine World Heritage sites. The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site participated through contributions from the German Wadden Sea National Parks, the Danish National Park, and the Waddenvereniging in the Netherlands, collectively engaging around 100 participants from schools, biosphere school class, UNESCO school, junior rangers, and environmental volunteers.

Looking ahead, the UNESCO Marine Programme and the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission are preparing for a second phase of the initiative. To enhance the scientific rigor and educational value of the next phase, the Wadden Sea partners involved in the previous phase have submitted feedback based on their experience. Key recommendations include: strengthening expert verification of eDNA results, reducing the time between sample collection, analysis, and feedback, simplifying participation tasks for school groups, focusing more complex data collection efforts on participant groups with long-term engagement.

Initial results from the first phase can be accessed at: <https://dashboard.ednaexpeditions.org/>
For corrections or updates to the list of species presented in the dashboard, please contact CWSS.

13. MoU Korean Getbol World Heritage site

This year’s MoU study visit focuses on architectural design, exhibition planning, and operations for establishing the international-level Gochang Getbol World Heritage Center. The study visit is planned for 10-20 May 2025, the visiting Gochang Delegation includes 9 participants including people from the World Heritage Department at Gochang County, the Ramsar Gochang Getbol Visitor Center and the NGO Eco-Horizon.

In the framework of the MoU, the World Heritage Promotion Team of Korean Tidal Flats extended an invitation to the *International Symposium on the Developing of a CEPA Action Plan and Enhancing Visitor Center Operations for Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats World Heritage* (17-19 April 2025). The symposium aims to raise stakeholder awareness, strengthen the capacities of site managers, and foster sustainable partnerships to support the conservation and effective management of the Getbol – Korean Tidal Flats World Natural Heritage. Anja Szczesinski (WWF and IWSS Coordinator) and Bernd Rauhut (Director of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Visitor Centre in Cuxhaven) will contribute with presentations on CEPA strategies and planning, as well as CEPA-related activities in the Wadden Sea, respectively.

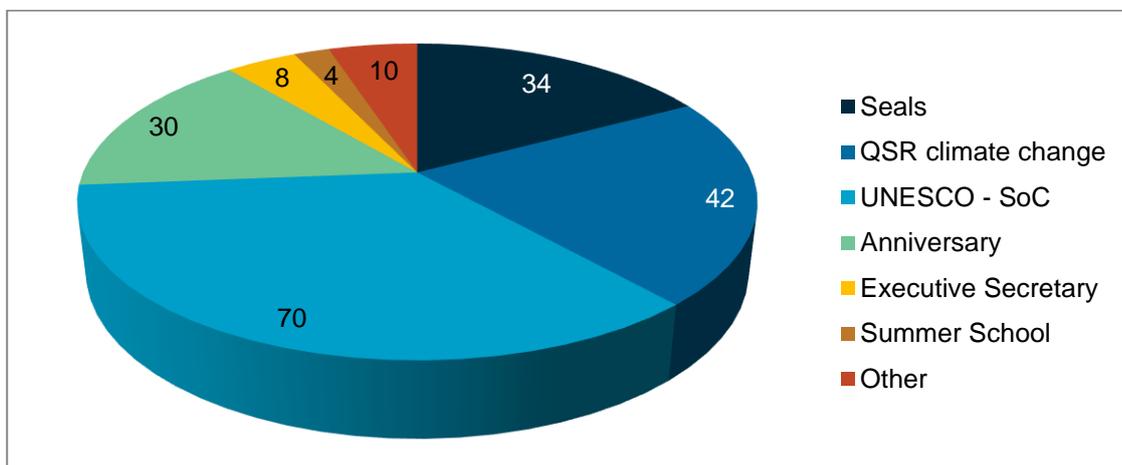
14. Young Climate Action for World Heritage brochure published

A [final publication](#) on the 2022/2023 project “Young Climate Action for World Heritage” has now been published. It showcases the project's results, provides guidance on student-centred, transformative and action-oriented World Heritage education, and offers a practical toolkit for exploring World Heritage. The project was organised and implemented by the Institute Heritage Studies and the German Commission for UNESCO and funded by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt). The Wadden Sea was one of six transboundary World Heritage Sites involved. Students from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Germany and neighboring countries spent the school year developing their own climate and heritage projects. The International Wadden Sea School supported schools in the region, provided educational materials and upcycled bags made from old World Heritage banners, joined workshops on Hallig Langeneß and in St. Peter-Ording, and offered expert guidance.

15. Media review 2024

Press review

- 6 press releases (2023: 4) by CWSS on seals reports, WSD, Executive Secretary, Summer School, Swimway Conference
- 205 mentions in printed, broadcasting, and online media (178 in 2023)
 - 68 NL, 1 DK, 126 DE, 11 other (2023: 8 NL, 0 DK, 158 DE, 12 other)
- Distribution of entries by topic:



Website review

- 49 news items posted in 2024 (2023: 46)
- 147,000 website visitors (2023: 144,000); 34.2% DE, 21.3% NL, 6.1% DK
- Most popular pages (in that order): CWSS, CMS, QSR climate change, Netherlands, Resources, Summer School, WH map, job vacancies, WH page, QSR species section
- Microsites: QSR 22,580 users (2023: 17,000); Flyway 2,000 users (2023: 1,300); Swimway: 600 users (2023: 232)
- Newsletter: increase of subscribers from 307 to 347 (compared to December 2023); excellent open-rate with an average of 55% and click-rate with an average of 18%.

Social media review

- **Instagram:**
 - Increase of 268 followers to 2,942; 42.2% DE, 31.6% NL, 5.5% DK
 - 109 posts with a total of 8,878 content interactions (2023: 10,556) and 54,872 reach; 134 stories (24-hour posts)
 - Engagement rate by reach (ERR): 2.8%
- **LinkedIn**
 - Increase of 584 followers to 1,275 followers
 - 95 posts with a total of 2,025 reactions (2023: 1,000) and 74,504 impressions (2023: 29,400)
 - Engagement rate: 9.9%
- **Facebook:**
 - Increase of 51 followers to 3,444; 44.9% DE, 28.9% NL, 5% DK
 - 126 posts with total of 1,447 content interaction (2023: 1,868) and page reach of 62,328 (2023: 65,010)
 - Engagement rate by reach (ERR): 2.3%