

Why is the Wadden Sea a UNESCO World Heritage Site?



Flyway

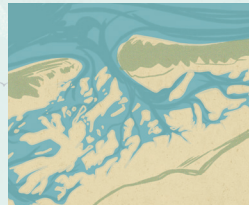
For many migratory waterbirds, the Wadden Sea is indispensable. They find food there to fatten up for their long journey between their breeding areas in the north and wintering areas in the south. This makes the Wadden Sea the most important staging site along the East Atlantic Flyway.



1

Pristine landscape

In the Wadden area you can clearly see how the landscape is created over and over again. Wind, water, and tides change the area day by day. Channels move, dunes appear and disappear, mudflats shift.



2

Nature moves

The Wadden Sea is very dynamic; it is salty and fresh, hot and cold, wet and dry. Animals constantly adapt to and in turn influence the landscape. This interaction between animals and their environment is very special.

3

Rare species diversity

Many plant and animal species live in the Wadden Sea. Some of these species have adapted so well to the dynamics of the area that exceptionally large populations are present. They are vital to migratory waterbirds from elsewhere in the world.

A joint effort

The integrity of this vast natural treasure trove is jointly protected by Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. From local residents, visitors and businesses to national parks, governments, green NGOs and cross-border collaborations, we're all playing a part.

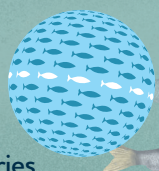
Diatoms

These are single-celled algae that form the basis of the food chain in the Wadden Sea. They are shaped like a box with a lid in various shapes. The typical brown colour is often found on mudflats.



Swimway

Over 100 fish species use the Wadden Sea during their lifetime. The number of fish varies greatly throughout the year and each fish species uses the Wadden Sea differently, for example, to spawn, to grow, or to search for food. The Wadden Sea forms an indispensable link between fresh and salt water.



Nursery

The Wadden Sea is the nursery for many (flat) fish.



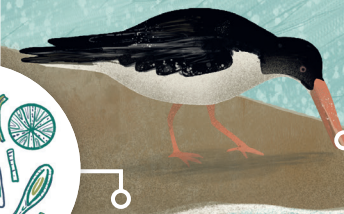
Periwinkles

Lock themselves in their shells at low tide and take a trickle of water to keep their gills moist.



Perfectly adapted

The oystercatcher's beak changes to become a suitable tool depending on the food source: if it eats mainly worms, its beak becomes pointed – perfect for poking. To open cockles or mussels, it uses its beak as a chisel and it becomes shorter and blunt.



Eider duck

Swallows whole cockles or mussels in one go. Its strong stomach crushes the shells into small pieces, which it then excretes.



Lugworm

Lives in a u-shaped tube and eats a lot of sand from which it extracts food particles. It defecates cleaned sand, creating "spaghetti" piles.



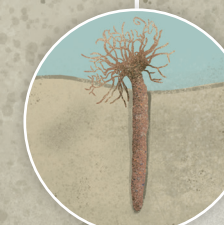
Glasswort

This plant copes very well with salt water. The glasswort accumulates salt inside its cells and produces seeds before dying from too much salt in autumn.



Sand mason

Builds a sturdy tube of sand, shell debris, and slime which protects its soft body from enemies. Eats plankton it catches from the water with tentacles. Sand masons can form entire reefs!



Sea pink

Has pretty pink flowers and is common on the higher salt marsh, where they form tussocks. Sometimes they can also be found along roads due to the use of road salt in winter.



Sea wormwood

Often found in large stands on the middle saltmarsh. Gives off a special scent and was used to be put in clothes to repel fleas.



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Illustration: Kim Merel

