



Citizen Science in the Wadden Sea

An overview of the current state of and opportunities for citizen science in the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea

Report (work in progress)

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Abstract

Having received a World Heritage status in 2009 the Wadden Sea is recognized as one of the most important intertidal areas in the world. The Wadden Sea is not a pristine nature area, but also used by man. Both human use and natural values are monitored, and this monitoring is of great value for science, policy and proper management of this unique area. The project 'Wadden Sea Long-Term Ecosystem Research' (WaLTER) aims to provide advice on how to improve the efficiency of these monitoring programs, to fill the gaps and to provide users with an organized data portal in which they can find specific data. As part of the WaLTER project we here investigate the potential of so-called "Citizen Science", i.e. monitoring by volunteers, to increase the efficiency of current monitoring in the Dutch Wadden Sea. Cooperation between professional scientists, NGOs and amateurs exists but needs further stimulation. Successful projects, like monitoring breeding and migratory birds throughout the entire Wadden Sea, should be extended to other taxa like the benthos of tidal flats or terrestrial arthropods in salt marshes and sand dunes. Socio-economic monitoring programmes on human use like recreational boating and the monitoring of tourist experiences (Hotspotmonitor) for example could add much value. Furthermore, rapid technological developments in sensors, mobile applications and online data visualization tools offer great potential for increasing the efficiency and quality of monitoring in the Wadden region, especially when combined in a platform like WaLTER.