Approach
Monitoring of tourism and natural values are essential if effective policies for the development of sustainable tourism are to be established. A plan is being drawn-up to map the numbers and distributions of recreational activities in the Wadden Sea, which can also be used to study the impacts on populations of wading birds and seals. In addition to an analysis of socio-economic aspects of tourism, innovative and interactive instruments are also being developed in order to sketch a spatial representation of tourists experiences and appreciations of nature.

Core
The plentiful natural and scenic values of the Wadden Sea area make it a desirable holiday destination. In the Netherlands alone, millions of tourists overnight in the Wadden Sea region every year. Seals resting on the tidal flats are part of the attraction, along with the millions of migrating birds, which use the Wadden Sea as a rest and feeding stop-over during their journeys between the Arctic breeding grounds and African overwintering grounds. Some tourist activities can, however, lead to disturbance of wading birds and seals.

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