

Conservation and Management Plan for the Wadden Sea Seal Population 2018-22

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE WADDEN SEA SEAL POPULATION 2018-22

According to Art. IV. of the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea, which has entered into force on October 1, 1991.

Explanatory note:

The evaluation version of the conservation and management plan is divided into three columns according to the following scheme:

Seal Agreement: *The objectives and obligations of the Agreement.*

Required effort and objectives: *The objectives and activities required to achieve the objectives.*

Action in 2018-2022: *The actions which should be implemented at trilateral or national level in addition to the current protection measures which already exist.*

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
	1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE		
1	<p><i>Seal Agreement Art. III</i></p> <p>The Parties shall cooperate closely with a view to achieving and maintaining a favourable conservation status for the seal population.</p>	<p>To achieve these general objectives, it will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to achieve and maintain a comprehensive conservation and management of both harbour and grey seal populations in the Wadden Sea through common, coordinated measures of the responsible authorities; and - to achieve and maintain a public understanding and awareness of the Wadden Sea seal populations as an entity and as an integrated part of the ecosystem. 	<p>TRILATERALLY Define criteria for maintaining a favourable conservation status.</p>
2	<p><i>Seal Agreement Art. II, b) and d)</i></p> <p>b) The “Agreement Area” means the area of water known as the Wadden Sea, including all sandbanks therein as well as all shore areas of the North Sea coasts of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands between Blaavandshuk to the north and Den Helder to the west. The main ranges and the main migration routes are located in the Wadden Sea.</p>	<p>The Agreement Area is the Wadden Sea Area (Trilateral Cooperation Area) as depicted in Annex 1.</p>	<p>TRILATERALLY Management of the Wadden Sea seal population will take account of developments outside the Agreement Area to the extent relevant. TSEG will in the coming period provide specific advice on implications for the management of the population in the Agreement Area.</p>

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
	d) "habitat" means any part of the Agreement Area which is essential to the maintenance of the vital biological functions of seals, including but not limited to breeding, whelping, nursing, feeding or resting;		
	2. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES		
	Habitats		
3	<p><i>Seal Agreement, Art. VII, 1</i></p> <p>1. The Parties shall take appropriate measures for the protection of habitats. They shall pay due regard to the necessity of creating and maintaining a network of protected areas also in the migration areas of the seals in the Agreement Area and of ensuring the preservation of areas which are essential to the maintenance of the vital biological functions of seals.</p>	<p>Efforts should be made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to identify, maintain, extend and create protected areas for seals of an appropriate size in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation Area and in adjacent areas and to take appropriate measures; - to ensure that the existing seal reserves cover the main birth, nursery and resting areas of seals and ensure that there is an adequate number of seal reserves; - in order to provide adequate management advice regarding designating seal interest zones / reserves, at sea, including areas outside the trilateral conservation area, more information is still needed about aquatic habitats (e.g. mating and feeding areas); - to ensure that designations of seal reserves are based on well-defined criteria essential to the maintenance of the vital biological functions of seals, especially with a view to expected increases in human activities. 	<p>THE NETHERLANDS AND GERMANY Evaluate if current measures are in line with the Seal Agreement.</p> <p>THE NETHERLANDS Evaluate current status of haul-outs; make sure protection of the seals is still adequate despite changes in management.</p> <p>TRILATERALLY Continue to evaluate the protection status of the haul-out sites; TSEG to combine information on protected haul-out and breeding sites for seals in the Wadden Sea and offshore area, in order to verify if appropriate habitats are protected. TSEG will provide a map with haul-out sites and breeding areas.</p> <p>TRILATERALLY Investigation of habitat requirements of seals in relation to human activities. The TSEG will create a map of designated haul-out sites, to identify possible areas of conflict.</p>

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
4	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. VII, 2</i> 2. The Parties shall preserve habitats and seals present from undue disturbances or changes resulting, directly or indirectly, from human activities.	- to ensure that the seal reserves are created in such a way that disturbance is limited to a minimum;	TRILATERALLY Development of a trilateral framework for guidelines to regulate excursions by boats and from land. Provide support for further studies on cumulative disturbance effects.
5		- to avoid increase in the disturbance by air traffic;	TRILATERALLY Monitor possible changes in regulations. The effect of increasing private and commercial use of drones should be investigated.
6		- to prohibit disturbing activities in harbour seal reserves at least during breeding and moulting from 15 May to 01 September;	TRILATERALLY Evaluate the disturbance for harbour seals by all types of vessels and activities outside the seal reserves in the time from 15 May to 01 September. The TSEG should continue to promote research on habitat requirements and the effects of disturbances and "safe" distances from disturbances: both on haulouts and in the water.
7		- to determine and reduce the number of seals caught as by-catch in fishing activities and ensure that seals do not drown in fyke nets;	TRILATERALLY Improve the collection of information on drowning/entanglement of seals in fisheries in the Wadden Sea and adjacent waters. Recommend to install a trilateral stranding database. Collect information on procedures and develop standardized autopsies and undertake evaluation of strandings within the trilateral area.

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
8	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. VII, 3</i> 3. The Parties shall have regard to the protection of habitats from adverse effects resulting from activities carried out outside the Agreement Area.	To determine the effects on the seal population of e.g. prey depletion, oil spills and water pollution (including impact of dredging, wind farms, detonation of bombs and traffic).	TRILATERALLY Explore options for monitoring and assessment of effects from activities carried out outside the Agreement Area.
9	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. VII, 4</i> 4. The parties shall explore the possibility of restoring degraded habitats and of creating new ones.		
Pollution			
10	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. VIII, a</i> The Wadden Sea States are determined to do their utmost to further reduce pollution of the North Sea from whatever source with the aim of conserving and protecting the Agreement Area. To this end they shall: a) endeavour to identify the sources of such pollution; <i>see also Seal Agreement, Art. VIII, b and c under 3. RESEARCH AND MONITORING: Monitoring of Pollution</i>	<p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to reduce the pollution from whatever source, i.e. to continue to coordinate efforts to further reduce the pollution of the Wadden Sea and North Sea. b. to ensure that dumping of dredged material, or taking of mud and sand in or near the Wadden Sea will have no negative effects on seals and their haul-out sites. 	TRILATERALLY Objectives have to be brought in line with WFD, MSFD, Natura 2000 and OSPAR EcoQO's; actions have to be taken in accordance with the assessment results for the pollution levels. TRILATERALLY Explore options on monitoring and assessment of effects from dumping of dredged material.
Wardening			
11	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. VI, 4</i> 4. The Parties shall take appropriate action to suppress illegal hunting and taking of seals.	<p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of the agreement by an adequate management and wardening system, which should - - be coordinated at state administrative agencies insofar as any seal-related matters are concerned. 	TRILATERALLY TSEG will provide further advice on basis of the results of a planned trilateral workshop on wardening.

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ensure that the seal reserves are, as parts of the nature reserves and the national parks, adequately warded. - to designate administrative agencies responsible for seal wardening. - to ensure a coordination of the state and voluntary wardens. - to ensure that the seal reserves are clearly marked and indicated on sea charts. 	
	3. RESEARCH AND MONITORING		
	Research and Monitoring		
12	<p><i>Seal Agreement, Art. V, 1</i></p> <p>1. The Parties shall coordinate their research programmes and projects and their monitoring of the seal population to increase their knowledge of the biology and the habitat including harmful effects of human activities on the seal population to provide a basis for measures to improve its conservation status.</p>	<p><u>Research</u> It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to establish an overview/database of recent and on-going research projects and scientific articles on seals relevant to the Wadden Sea population to ensure information exchange; 	<p>TRILATERALLY Continuation of the provision of an overview on ongoing and planned research projects, reporting of results derived from these projects, and assessment of relevance for the trilateral management and research on seals. Report all research projects on seals or related to seals in the Wadden Sea to the TSEG and to the coordinating institution (CWSS). Efforts should be made to provide access to all data collected by public or private companies that are relevant for the management of seals.</p>
13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to consider a trilateral project on the feeding ecology of seals; 	<p>TRILATERALLY Initiate and/or support trilateral and national projects addressing spatio-temporal feeding ecology.</p>
144		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to consider a trilateral project on habitat use on a Wadden Sea seal population scale. 	<p>TRILATERALLY Initiate and support a joint trilateral project addressing habitat use of seals, also based on recently obtained telemetry data.</p>

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to use seals, which are top predators, as a bioindicator of the condition of the environment and anthropogenic impacts. 	<p>TRILATERALLY Initiate joint inventory of existing research on top predators as bio indicators and explore options for further research.</p> <p>Initiate joint inventory of existing research on health assessment and investigations on effects of anthropogenic activities.</p>
15	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. V, 2</i> 2. They shall, in particular, monitor and coordinate their research on,	<p><u>Monitoring</u></p> <p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to designate institutions responsible for monitoring. - to ensure that monitoring is carried out by institutions on a long-term basis in order to guarantee continuity in reliability and comparability of data obtained by the monitoring scheme. - to promote the harmonization of the surveys in the different countries in order to obtain more comparable results, to be used for the assessment of population sizes and other demographic parameters. 	<p><u>Authorities/institutions designated as responsible for monitoring:</u></p> <p>DENMARK: Aarhus University, Department of Bioscience, Roskilde</p> <p>SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN: Landesbetrieb für Küstenschutz, Nationalpark und Meeresschutz Schleswig-Holstein, Nationalparkverwaltung (LKN-SH)</p> <p>HAMBURG: Behörde für Umwelt und Energie/ Nationalpark-Verwaltung Hamburgisches Wattenmeer (BUE)</p> <p>LOWER SAXONY: Nationalparkverwaltung Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer (NLPV): Grey seal; Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (LAVES): Harbour seal</p> <p>NETHERLANDS: Wageningen MARINE RESEARCH</p>
16	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. V, 2 a and b</i> a) population trends e.g. through periodic aerial surveys and counts; b) seal migration;	<p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to closely follow the population development according to a coordinated scheme specified basically in the report by 	<p>TRILATERALLY Continuation of the seal counts by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) planning of the dates for the five coordinated flights (TMAP-parameter), and

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Trilateral Seal Expert Group-plus (TSEG-plus). - to carry out a minimum of 5 aerial surveys each year comprised of 3 surveys during pupping and 2 surveys during the moulting period in order to assess trends in population size and distribution. 	<p>b) assessment of the aerial survey results (in terms of numbers and distribution) and reporting to TG-M and WSB by 01. Nov</p> <p>Based on a scientific assessment, TSEG will provide a proposal for 3 extra coordinated counts every fifth year (2 during pupping season, 1 during moult) for consideration by the management authorities. Denmark will be invited to reconsider their decision about the frequency of counts.</p>
17	<i>Seal Agreement, Art. V, 2 c</i> c) seal population parameters, e.g. diseases, survival, age structure, sex ratio.		TRILATERALLY <p>Continuation of the involvement of TSEG in the discussions (within OSPAR, Habitats Directive and MSFD.) on the definition of appropriate ranges for change in population size as an alerting signal to take additional management actions, and proposal of such action for adoption to TG-MM / WSB.</p>
	Monitoring of Pollution		
18	<i>Seals Agreement, Art. VIII, b and c</i> The Wadden Sea States are determined to do their utmost to further reduce pollution of the North Sea from whatever source with the aim of conserving and protecting the Agreement Area. To this end they shall: b) coordinate their research projects regarding seal diseases and the effects on the seal population of such substances, e.g. organochlorine compounds, heavy metals and oil, and agree on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TSEG should support research projects related to diseases and effects of pollutants/contaminants and should ensure that the relevant results are reported back to TSEG. - to monitor seal tissue concerning selected contaminants with coordinated and standardized methods within the framework of TMAP. - to consider the establishment of a tissue bank according to common guidelines. 	TRILATERALLY <p>Efforts are needed to ensure that samples can be analysed in hindsight. Therefore, a tissue bank should be maintained to monitor developments in diseases and pollution levels.</p> <p>The development and effects of new pollutants with physiological impacts should be monitored (e.g. immunological, endocrine, reproductive, neurological, toxicological, parasitological, microbiological and virological aspects).</p> <p>Running programmes have to be checked for gaps</p>

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	<p>methods which permit a comparison of research results;</p> <p>c) monitor in the Agreement Area, in particular in seal tissue and organisms which are preyed upon by seals, the levels of those substances which in the light of the results of research appear to play a major role in the conservation status of the seal population.</p> <p><i>see also Seal Agreement, Art. VIII, a under 2. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES: Pollution</i></p>		concerning the information required for SMP.
	4. TAKING AND EXEMPTIONS FOR TAKING		
	Taking		
19	<p><i>Seal Agreement, Art. VI, 1</i></p> <p>1. The Parties shall prohibit the taking of seals from the Wadden Sea.</p>	<p>The taking of seals from the Wadden Sea shall be prohibited by the parties.</p> <p>It is strongly advised that authorities respect Art VI of the Seal Agreement and §§56-61 of the Leeuwarden Declaration.</p>	<p>NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Serious effort should be taken to Implement provisions in appropriate form in national legislation, in accordance with the Leeuwarden declaration.</p>
	Exemptions for Taking		
20	<p><i>Seal Agreement, Art. VI, 2, first part</i></p> <p>2. The competent authorities may grant exemptions from the prohibition referred to in the first paragraph authorizing persons to take seals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for institutions to be designated performing scientific research into the conservation of the seal population in the Wadden Sea or the conservation of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, insofar as the information required for such research cannot be obtained in any other way; or 	<p>It will be necessary to ensure §§ 56 - 61 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (LD), which are based on the "Statement on Seal Rehabilitation and Release, based on scientific experience and knowledge" elaborated by seal experts in 1994:</p> <p>§ 60 to reduce the current number of seals taken from and released to the Wadden Sea to the lowest level possible, by applying guidelines for handling diseased or weakened seals or evidently abandoned pups, and to release seals based on the precautionary approach, referred to in the "Statement on Seal Rehabilitation and</p>	<p>NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Given the prosperous development of the seal population in the Wadden Sea, suggesting vitality in terms of both health and reproduction, §§ 56 - 61 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (LD) are strongly reconfirmed, especially §60, taking into account that ethical considerations, legislation, as well as management practices differ in the three countries.</p> <p>Annual reporting to the coordinating institution (CWSS) of the extent of rehabilitation and procedure at the seal centers as provided for in the</p>

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		Release, based on scientific experience and knowledge" as elaborated by seal experts.	questionnaires. Analyses of the annual reported data by TSEG and reporting to TG-MM. TSEG strongly encourages local implementation of the Seal Agreement and Leeuwarden Declaration. TSEG requests CWSS to establish a database containing the numbers and species held at rehabilitation centers for all years to enable an annual evaluation by TSEG.
21		The guidelines shall be based upon the following principles: § 60.1 only a very limited number of persons in each country shall be authorized to decide on the handling of diseased or weakened seals or abandoned pups, including taking and releasing of the animals, and only such animals may be taken which have a chance to survive; § 60.2 seals rehabilitated shall only be released into the wild on a permit granted by the national authority responsible for nature conservation and management if the following criteria are met:	Decrease the number of permits to the lowest possible number. Designated national authorities responsible for granting exemptions from taking and releasing: DENMARK Danish Environmental Protection Agency SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN Landesbetrieb für Küstenschutz, Nationalpark und Meeresschutz Schleswig-Holstein, Nationalparkverwaltung (LKN-SH) HAMBURG Behörde für Umwelt und Energie/ Nationalpark-Verwaltung Hamburgisches Wattenmeer (BUE) LOWER SAXONY Counties of Aurich and Cuxhaven, further agencies may be involved by the counties THE NETHERLANDS Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. <u>Designated scientific institutions (1) and seal rehabilitation centers (2):</u> DENMARK Aarhus University (1)

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			<p>LOWER SAXONY Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (LAVES) (1); Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW), University of Veterinary Medicine, Hannover (TIHO), Foundation (1) Seehundstation Norden / Norddeich (2)</p> <p>SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN Institute for Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Research (ITAW), University of Veterinary Medicine, Hannover (TIHO), Foundation (1) Seehundstation Friedrichskoog (2)</p> <p>THE NETHERLANDS Wageningen MARINE RESEARCH, Texel (1); Zeehondencentrum, Pieterburen (2); Ecomare, Texel (2)</p> <p>Depending the outcome of national discussions, based on the advice of an international science committee, the Netherlands should propose to amend the list of designated rescue centers</p>
22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the seal has not been treated with specific groups of medicine to be further specified. (ii) the seal does not carry pathogens alien* to the wild population; (*Definition of alien pathogen: Pathogens which are normally not found in the Wadden Sea area.) (iii) the seal is released as soon as possible but no later than half a year after it has been brought in for rehabilitation; (iv) the seal has not been kept in a center where species of animals alien* to the Wadden Sea, or marine mammals not resident in the Wadden Sea, are held 	<p>TRILATERALLY Out of concern for the wild population, TSEG supports efforts and discussion on the treatment and use of medicine in seal rehabilitation. To avoid the introduction of alien and resistant pathogens systematic and preventive treatment should not be allowed.</p> <p>NATIONAL LEVEL Prohibit the keeping of seal species other than harbour and grey seals in Wadden Sea seal centers. Avoid the taking of harbour and grey seals from areas outside the Wadden Sea and keeping them in Wadden Sea seal centers.</p>

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		<p>(*Definition: Areas not belonging to the Wadden Sea Agreement Area should be considered alien in this context.)</p> <p>§ 60.3 seals should only be released in the areas where they were found;</p> <p>§ 60.4 seals shall not be transported between subregions of the Wadden Sea;</p>	<p>Prohibit the release of seals that were kept in centers other than the Wadden Sea seal centers into the Wadden Sea, taking into account that ethical considerations, legislation, as well as management practices differ in the three countries.</p> <p>Annual reporting to the coordinating institution (CWSS) of keeping of seal species in the centers as provided for in the questionnaires. Analyses of the annually reported data by TSEG and reporting to TG-MM.</p>
23		<p>§ 60.5 seals held in captivity shall, in principle, not be released into the wild;</p> <p>§ 60.6 seals born in captivity shall not be released into the wild; exemptions can only be allowed after the approval of the competent authorities.</p>	<p>NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Annual reporting to the coordinating institution (CWSS) of keeping and release of seal species in the centers as provided for in the questionnaires.</p> <p>Analyses of the annually reported data by TSEG and reporting to TG-MM.</p>
24	<p><i>Seal Agreement, Art. VI, 2, second part</i></p> <p>for institutions to be designated nursing seals in order to release them after recovery, insofar as these are diseased or weakened seals or evidently abandoned suckling seals.</p> <p>Seals which are clearly suffering and cannot survive may be killed by the persons referred to in this paragraph.</p>	<p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ensure at each seal rehabilitation center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specialized veterinarian monitoring of the animals; - writing of a station diary on each individual animal; - full time specialized supervision of the station; - standards for the supervision have to be developed. 	<p>TRILATERALLY AND NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Define the responsibility of the TSEG regarding checks of the rehabilitation centers. Enable an independent check of the seal center records at a national/trilateral level by responsible state agencies.</p> <p>The TSEG should advise on a revision of the standardized annual reporting formats presently used, as well as on possible other relevant data to be collected from seals taken.</p> <p>Annual reporting of this item according to the agreed format to the coordinating institution (CWSS). National authorities should report details on rehabilitated and released seals to facilitate analysis</p>

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
			by the TSEG. Analyses will be reported by TSEG annually to TG-MM.
25	<p><i>Seal Agreement Art. VI, 3</i></p> <p>3. Any Party having granted exemptions as mentioned above shall notify the other Parties as soon as possible and provide them an opportunity for review and comment.</p>	<p>It will be necessary for each Party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to report annually exemptions and the number of taken and released seals to the coordinating institution (CWSS). 	<p>Trilaterally</p> <p>From all animals taken, either euthanized, otherwise killed, or rehabilitated and released, at least the following information has to be collected and reported annually to the coordinating institution (CWSS): Number of seals taken and released, age (alternatively length), sex, time and location where the animal was found, and time and location of release of rehabilitated seals.</p> <p>At the beginning of the year, each country provides the coordinating institution with a complete list of the above-mentioned data collected in the past year. The data will be provided to the TSEG in order to evaluate the data for their significance in relation to monitoring possible changes in the population. TSEG to report annually to TG-MM.</p> <p>The TSEG should advise on a revision of the standardized annual reporting formats presently used, as well as on possible other relevant data to be collected from seals taken.</p>

	Seal Agreement	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018-22
	5. PUBLIC INFORMATION		
26	<p><i>Seal Agreement, Art. X</i></p> <p>The Parties shall take such measures as may be required to make the general public aware of the conservation status of the seal population, of the content and aims of this Agreement, and of the measures they have taken pursuant to this Agreement, including the Conservation and Management Plan, to improve this conservation status.</p>	<p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to inform the public on a common basis to contribute to the continuous implementation of the conservation and management plan; - to recognize the fact that harbour seals of the Wadden Sea belong to one population and are an integral part of the Wadden Sea ecosystem; - to ensure that in each seal center a qualified public awareness officer takes care of public information; - to ensure that the dissemination of information, that could promote the taking of seals will be avoided; - to ensure that the public is aware of what behaviour disturbs seals and how to avoid it; - to ensure that the public knows what to do in case they find a live or dead seal on the beach. 	<p>TRILATERALLY / NATIONAL LEVEL</p> <p>Publish a brochure including, e.g., information on the status of the seal population, the aims of the Seal Agreement and the Seal Management Plan, the views on rehabilitation, the need to guarantee the primary objective to achieve managing the Wadden Sea as a nature area with the lowest possible human interference.</p> <p>The state agencies responsible for seal management should bring this message to the public.</p> <p>TSEG to publish a trilateral assessment report on trends in numbers and distribution of the seal population by 1 November each year. CWSS will ensure that the media are informed will provide literature and background information on its web site.</p>
	6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS		
27	<p>a. national: The implementation of the common Conservation and Management Plan in national measures including monitoring to be financed by the contracting parties.</p>		<p>TSEG stresses the importance of continuous financing of coordinated seal monitoring in the Wadden Sea.</p>
28	<p>b. common: Possibly joint brochure.</p>		See action under 5. Public Information

7. ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE GREY SEAL IN THE WADDEN SEA

According to the Conservation and Management Plan for the Wadden Sea Seal Population 1991 - 1995 (Seal Management Plan), which was elaborated in accordance with article 4 of the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea, the only species covered was the common seal (*Phoca vitulina*). Since the Seal Management Plan 1996-2000 additional measures for the protection of the grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) in the Wadden Sea have also been included, in accordance with §61 of the Leeuwarden Declaration 1994 (LD). Pursuant to §61LD, the principles and guidelines concerning taking of seals, rehabilitation and releasing of seals, which are given under §60 LD, should also apply to the grey seal in the Wadden Sea.

Grey Seal Management	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018 - 2022
1. TAKING AND EXEMPTIONS FOR TAKING	<p>According to §61, § 60 of the Leeuwarden Declaration and the relevant chapter of the Seal Management Plan 2002 - 2006 for the harbour seal is also valid for the grey seal in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p>LD § 60 to reduce the current number of seals taken from and released into the Wadden Sea to the lowest level possible by applying guidelines for handling diseased or weakened seals or evidently abandoned pups, and to release seals based on the precautionary approach.</p>	<p>NATIONAL LEVEL Implement provisions in appropriate form in national legislation. Continue acting in accordance with national law. Focus should be on seal center evaluation.</p> <p>NATIONAL LEVEL §56 - §61 of the Leeuwarden Declaration (LD) are strongly reconfirmed, especially §60, taking into account that ethical considerations, legislation, as well as management practices differ in the three countries.</p> <p>Annual reporting of the extent of rehabilitation and procedures at the seal centers according to questionnaires to the coordinating institution (CWSS). Analyses of the annual reported data by TSEG and reporting to TG-MM.</p> <p>TSEG requests local implementation of the Seal Agreement and Leeuwarden Declaration.</p>
ADDITIONAL MEASURES Additional measures and activities to be taken for the protection of the grey seal in the Wadden Sea include:		
2. HABITATS	1. Ensure that the grey seal colonies are protected by reserves which are maintained, extended and created in	1. Grey seal haul-out and breeding sites should be protected in line with the requirements for the

Grey Seal Management	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018 - 2022
	<p>such a way that disturbance is limited to a minimum.</p> <p>2. Install seal sanctuaries on beaches including a wardening system where possible and acceptable, and to install a flexible protection scheme of "contemporary undisturbed areas" in regions where grey seal pups rest regularly.</p>	<p>protection of harbour seals; ensure, by special measures, the protection of grey seals during pupping, breeding and moulting.</p> <p>2. Promote timely implementation of NATURA 2000 Network (Marine Ecosystem).</p>
<p>3. RESEARCH AND MONITORING</p> <p>Grey seals are now a permanent and important part of the fauna of the Wadden Sea. The supporting of efforts nationally and trilaterally to study grey seals should be continued. However, part of the encountered animals may not belong to local breeding stocks. Grey seals are known as being very mobile, and there will be significant migration into and out of the area. It is considered essential for a proper management to acquire knowledge on developments in distribution and abundance of animals in the Wadden Sea and on Helgoland. These actions on population biology of grey seals need to be trilaterally coordinated.</p>	<p>(1) Understanding of habitat requirements by using telemetry, movements and behaviour of grey seals in the Wadden Sea.</p> <p>(2) Understanding population developments and structure by use of photo-identification, telemetry and genetic techniques and aerial surveys.</p> <p>(3) Improve monitoring of health status of grey seals.</p> <p>(4) encourage research projects on feeding ecology and species competition.</p> <p>(5) Carrying out a minimum of 5 (preferably aerial) surveys each year, comprised of 3 surveys during pupping (December) and 2 surveys during the moulting period (March and April).</p>	<p>TRILATERALLY</p> <p>1. Implementation of coordinated grey seal surveys and yearly reporting of trilateral grey seal counts will be continued by carrying out of a minimum of 5 annual surveys comprising 3 surveys from plane or from land during pupping (December) and 2 preferably aerial surveys during the moulting period (March-April).</p> <p>2. Assessment of developments: Assessment of the results in terms of trends in numbers and distribution by TSEG and reporting to TG-MM and WSB 1 July each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helgoland will still be part of the grey seal monitoring, <p>3. Evaluate any disturbances from land, water or air and activities outside the areas permanently used by seals during the whole year.</p> <p>Continuation of the involvement of TSEG in the discussions (within OSPAR, Habitat Directive and MSFD) on the definition of appropriate ranges for change in population size as an alerting signal to take additional management actions and propose these for adoption to TG-MM / WSB.</p>

Grey Seal Management	Required effort and objectives	Actions 2018 - 2022
		5. Support additional studies on ecology and diet of grey seals
<p>4. WARDENING</p> <p>The Parties shall take appropriate action to suppress illegal hunting and taking of seals.</p>	<p>It will be necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of the agreement by an adequate management and wardening system, which should - be coordinated by state administrative agencies insofar as any seal-related matters are concerned. - to ensure that the seal reserves are, as parts of the nature reserves and the national parks, adequately warded. - to designate administrative agencies responsible for seal wardening. - to ensure a coordination of the state and voluntary wardens. - to ensure that the seal reserves are clearly marked and indicated on sea charts. 	<p>TRILATERALLY</p> <p>TSEG will provide further advice on basis of the results of a planned trilateral workshop on wardening.</p>
<p>5. PUBLIC INFORMATION</p>		<p>Publish a brochure including, e.g., information on the status of the seal population, the aims of the Seal Agreement and the Seal Management Plan, the views on rehabilitation, the need to guarantee the primary objective of managing the Wadden Sea as a nature area with the lowest possible human interference.</p> <p>The state agencies responsible for seal management should bring this message to the public.</p> <p>TSEG to publish a trilateral assessment report by 1 July of each year. CWSS will ensure informing public media and will provide literature and background information on its web site.</p>

8. RESPONSIBLE BODIES

(according to Art. IX of the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea)

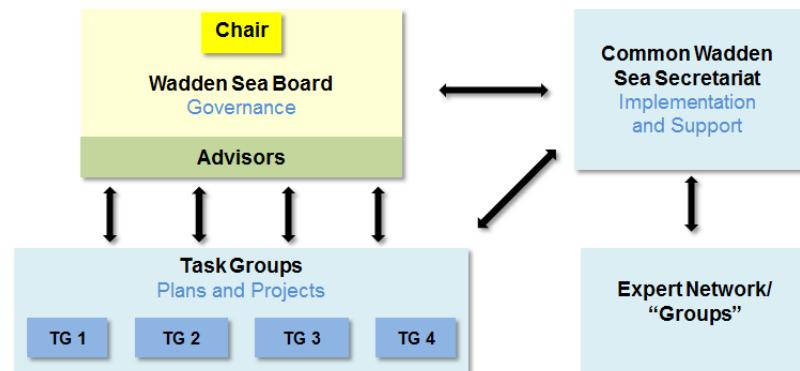
Responsible National Authorities:

Denmark: Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark Environmental Protection Agency Haraldsgade 53 DK - 2100 Copenhagen T + 45 72 54 40 00	Federal Republic of Germany: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Division N I 5 – Marine Nature Conservation Robert-Schumann-Platz 3 53175 Bonn T + 49 (0)228 99 305-2629 F +49 (0)228 99 305-2697
Netherlands: Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality Bezuidenhoutseweg 73 NL - 2594 AC Den Haag T + 31 70 3798911	Coordinating Institution: Common Wadden Sea Secretariat Virchowstr. 1 D - 26382 Wilhelmshaven T + 49 (0)44 21 – 91 08 0 F + 49 (0)44 21 – 91 08 30 E-mail: info@waddensea-secretariat.org

The coordinating institution shall be informed on all developments and activities which concern the Conservation and Management of the Wadden Sea Seal Population and an annual report shall be made on the implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, to be sent also to the Bonn Convention Secretariat.

Trilateral Seal Expert Group (TSEG)

The Wadden Sea Board has adopted an overall structure for the Task Groups (TG) and the Expert Network/Groups:



The TGs are generally policy task groups with a limited timeframe, number of members, and defined tasks, for which the WSB may allow exceptions. In general WSB-members should not be members of TGs. TGs

- a. report directly to the WSB
- b. are chaired by experienced administrative/ministerial representatives
- c. have a maximum lifespan of one presidency (Reinstallation under new presidency is possible, but requires specific new Board decision)

Expert Network "Groups" are generally long-term or permanent groups – exceptions are allowed. They have operational and advising tasks and

- a. report to the CWSS – WSB may allow exceptions
- b. are chaired by CWSS staff or others
- c. are (in principle, but not necessarily) permanent

The CWSS shall briefly report to the WSB on a yearly basis about the outcome and the further necessity of the groups.

Terms of Reference for the expert network groups operating in the framework of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation which are also valid for the Trilateral Seal Expert Group are to

- (1) ensure the exchange of information and experience between the various regions in the context of the WSP Targets and policies.
- (2) coordinate monitoring within the TMAP, assess the results of the monitoring and suggest any necessary amendments to the TMAP.
- (3) provide advice on the scientific basis for management in a trilateral context.
- (4) provide an annual progress report on the above points.

Members of the TSEG (March 2017) are

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Mr. Ralf Pund Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit Institut für Fische und Fischereierzeugnisse Schleusenstr. 1 D-27472 Cuxhaven phone: +49(0)4721 6989-22 fax: +49(0)4721 6989-16 email: Ralf.Pund@laves.niedersachsen.de	Mr. Richard Czeck (chair) Nationalparkverwaltung Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer Virchowstr. 1 D-26382 Wilhelmshaven phone: +49(0)4421 911-284 fax: +49(0)4421 911-280 email: Richard.Czeck@nlpv-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de	Mr. Armin Jeß Landesbetrieb für Küstenschutz, Nationalpark und Meeresschutz Schleswig-Holstein Nationalparkverwaltung Schloßgarten 1 D-25832 Tönning phone: +49(0) 4861 616 21 fax: +49(0)4861 616 69 email: Armin.Jess@lkn.landsh.de
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Annex 1: Cooperation Area (red line)

