

Integrated Management Plan

The Lower Saxon state government and the Bremen senate have, in association with the Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration (WSV), committed to creating a joint management plan for the Tideweser, in order to harmonise the ecological and economic interests within the region. The agreement involves the formulation of an Integrated Management Plan by the end of 2010 according to the EU Fauna-Flora-Habitat guidelines and legally based on Art. 6 (l) of the Habitats Directive, which calls for EU member states to specify measures necessary to achieve a favourable state of conservation for habitat types and/or species. All stakeholders are called on to participate in this process!

The Integrated Management Plan will bring together economic, social, infrastructural and regional aspects, as well as the conservation guidelines and specialised objectives. Interdisciplinary planning groups with representatives from administration, industry and associations have been set up for this purpose at the Lower Saxon State Office for Water Management, Coastal Protection and Conservation (NLWKN), as well as with the Bremen Senator for the Environment, City Development and Europe (SUBVE).

This Integrated Management Plan is to serve as a guideline for national activities. It offers a great variety of options for action and for development of the Tideweser region and is intended to increase planning reliability. The Plan also seeks to reach a negotiated agreement between all stakeholders regarding the preservation and consistent development of the ecological network Natura 2000.



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Photos: NLWKN image archive
SUBVE image archive



Natura 2000

The European Community has created an extensive network of ecological reserves for particularly precious habitats and species. This network, called "Natura 2000", aims to preserve biological diversity and prevent the extinction of numerous plant and animal species. The network to date comprises more than 20,000 "Fauna-Flora-Habitat" areas and 4,000 bird reserves in all 25 member states and may be considered the world's largest conservation project.

As highly complex natural areas, large parts of the Weser estuary and the Lower Weser river ("Tideweser") have been declared "special reserves" by the state governments of Lower Saxony and Bremen under both the EU "Habitats Directive" and the "Birds Directive", thus integrating them into the European ecological network Natura 2000.

Weser estuary and Lower Weser

"Estuary" is the term used to describe cone-shaped river mouths influenced by tides. Estuaries create habitats characterised by a mix of freshwater and saltwater, termed "brackish water". According to the EU Commission definition, the estuary habitat type stretches from the area of the river mouth to the upriver limits of the brackish water zone.

The Weser Integrated Management Plan includes the habitats and bird reserves of the Tideweser extending from

clockwise:
Barnacle Goose, Bittern, Seal, Checkered Daffodil



downstream of Hemelingen dam south to the mouth of the Weser. In addition, a number of other habitats and bird reserves which are closely functionally linked to the Weser have been either completely or partially included within the geographical boundaries of the Integrated Management Plan. These areas include the Lesum river, the navigable Hunte river as far as Oldenburg, and the tidal influenced Natura 2000 backwaters.

TIDE: Together for the Weser

As an extremely ecologically important region, with 90% of its water and floodbanks part of the Natura 2000 reserve system, the Tideweser region must adhere to the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, as well as the regulations of the EU Water Framework Directive.

In addition to these conservation requirements, the Tideweser is also subject to a variety of different usage requirements, as it constitutes an extremely important economic area for northern Germany and internationally, particularly due to the Weser ports. The Weser estuary and

the Lower Weser are also of great importance for industrial production, as well as for agriculture, fishing, flood and coastal protection, and tourism. Parts of the adjacent Weser marshes are also of historical significance as cultural landscapes.

The Weser is not the only tidally influenced estuary in the North Sea which faces this type of challenges. For this reason, it actively takes part in the INTERREG IVB North Sea Region Program's TIDE project (Tidal River Development), co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The general objective of TIDE is to make integrated management and planning a reality in the estuaries of the Weser, Elbe, Humber (GB) and Schelde (NL/B) rivers.

TIDE brings together the best available knowledge and practices from within these estuary regions and beyond, and fosters the exchange of experiences, as well as joint studies and assessments of estuary functioning, governance tools, and mitigation and compensation measures.

Both governmental authorities and scientific institutions will participate in this interdisciplinary project. In the project, the Weser estuary is represented by the Lower Saxony Water Management, Coastal Defence and Nature Conservation Agency (NLWKN), the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen (Senator for Economic Affairs and Ports, and Senator for the Environment, City Development and Europe), and the University of Bremen.

clockwise:
Typical shallow, Tegeler Plate, sandy beach at lower Weser, mudflat and reed belt along Strohhäuser Plate

