

# Netherlands

## Wadden Sea Area

**Declaration date:** 1986

**Surface area:** 260,000 ha

**Administrative division:** Institute for Forestry and Nature Research c/o The Netherlands MAB Committee

### Human activities:

Apart from tourism, main human activities in the biosphere reserve are fisheries, mussel culture, sand extraction, exploitation and transport of natural gas and oil, military training as well as engineering works for coastal protection. The area is of great significance from a research and monitoring point of view since geological, biological, physical and chemical activities were carried out for many decades and provide also historical data record.

### Ecological characteristics:

This biosphere reserve represents a section of the Wadden Sea area which extends along the coast of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. This Dutch biosphere reserve comprises the area between the town of Den Helder and the estuary of the Eems River whereas two more biosphere reserves represent the Wadden Sea on the German side. Wadden Sea Area Biosphere Reserve is a shallow coastal area partly with estuarine character. The Wadden Sea is protected by a chain of barrier islands and high sand flats. It consists of tidal channels and shallow open water, muddy and sandy tidal flats and sand marshes. The area is of international importance as staging, wintering, moulting and foraging area for many bird species and is therefore also designated as Ramsar site. The original Wadden Sea area has been diminished in size by gradual embankment of the adjoining salt-marshes and coastal embayments.



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