

# nature protection and maritime tourism in the Bird Protection Area, Wismar Bay - DE

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

## 2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Ecosystems based approach
- Socio-economic

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Similar conflicts between bird protection and nature conservation with tourism, recreational use, and tourism development exist in other regions affecting beach and offshore areas. Spatial planning for the sea side has not been widely spread between Baltic Sea Region countries. Thus, this case study considering beach and sea use facilitates the exchange of such planning procedures that are not only constricted to the terrestrial area of the coast.

## 4. Overview of the case

Wismar Bay is an EU Bird Protection Area, and at the same time a recreational site for maritime tourism, mainly during the summer time. Contradicting demands were identified and areas with priority for nature development or for recreational economy development were defined. Areas with on-going conflicting interests were identified and the conflicts rated. A feasible solution for all stakeholders was sought and finally agreed upon.

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

The Baltic Sea coast is under increasing pressure. An ICZM approach is urgently required to enable sustainable development. Large parts of the Wismar Bay belong to an EU Bird Protection Area. The bay encompasses an area of more than 23,000 ha. At the same time it is a recreational site for maritime tourism and locals. Heavy tourism pressure had already led to visible negative impacts on the coast. Contradicting demands posed spatial conflicts not only on land but also offshore. Development of tourism and the economy is desired by local municipalities. However, maritime tourism is mainly limited to the summer time. A solution was sought to lower conflicts between the tourism economy, recreational activities of locals and environmental protection aims.

### b) Objectives

The aims were to balance the different demands in land and water uses of coastal regions, thus finding balances between nature, social objectives, and the economy, for both present and future generations. Practical approaches for coastal zone management were aspired to within the work. The idea was derived from the VASAB2010Plus spatial developmental

programme. In the Wismar Bay, the first step was to identify areas with nature protection demands on the one hand, and the areas for present day and future maritime tourism demand on the other, and to find conflict solutions by integration of local stakeholders. The initiative ran from July 2002 – September 2005.

## **6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)**

### **a) Management**

It was managed by the state Ministry for Labour, Construction, and Regional Planning Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Local stakeholders were: yacht owners, surfers, anglers, canoers, harbour operators, tourism agencies, NGOs, municipalities, regional and local authorities dealing with nature protection and tourism.

### **b) ICZM tools**

All contradicting demands were identified and evaluated in close contact with the public, especially the local recreational users of the area. Due to the seasonal separation of tourism and recreation (summer) and nature protection demands (stronger in winter) some of the potential conflicts were reduced right away. Thus, areas with priority for nature development or for recreational economy development were defined. Areas with remaining conflicts of interests were identified and the conflicts rated. The three areas were depicted in maps. The stakeholders agreed upon a zoning concept for spatial and seasonal differentiation of the area. It brought together local users (water sports, fishing) and representatives of local nature protection authorities, and was integrated into discussing the future spatial use of the area. A feasible solution for all stakeholders was finally agreed upon. The stakeholder group is running an internet information platform, explaining some of the natural highlights, and providing the maps that define the spaces and times of uses. They promote the compromise for sharing space for recreation and tourism on one side and environmental protection on the other.

## **7. Cost and resources**

The costs are not known.

## **8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)**

Spatial conflicts were identified. All stakeholders were integrated to find the best, minimal impact solution for nature protection and recreational use. The project group has established a very informative website, and provides nautical maps that regulate when and where certain recreational uses are allowed or prohibited.

## **9. Success and Fail factors**

The zoning concept was integrated into the voluntary agreements for navigation regulations between the environmental NGO WWF and local user groups (SUPORTNET project). It is also used as a decision-making tool by municipalities and regional authorities to prepare territorial and environmental impact assessments, and Natura 2000 management plans.

## **10. Unforeseen outcomes**

The zoning concept was later integrated into the spatial development programme of the state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Conflicts between nature protection and maritime tourism demands had been over-estimated beforehand. Some could be solved by spatial and seasonal differentiation alone.

## **11. Prepared by**

Priv.-Doz. Dr. habil. Gerald Schernewski & Dr. Susanna Knotz, Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research








## 12. Verified by

Dr. Jürgen-Friedrich Autsch, Ministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Landesentwicklung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / Referat 440 – Raumordnerische Belange von Umwelt, Landwirtschaft und Tourismus, Raumordnungsverfahren, transnationale Raumordnung

## 13. Sources

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- The Interreg III B BaltCoast project: a pilot initiative on integrated coastal zone management in the Baltic Sea, 2002-2005. Findings and recommendations - final report (August 2005). BaltCoast.
- [www.naturschutz-wismarbucht.de/](http://www.naturschutz-wismarbucht.de/)

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